FRAGGED EMPIRE 2

Setting Guide

Tabletop RPG

FRAGGED EMPIRE 2

Created by Wade Dyer

Your genetically engineered people are just now returning to the stars to usher in the dawn of a new age. Now is the time to reconnect with other forgotten species, explore war-torn worlds, combat ancient threats and forge new frontiers.

www.fraggedempire.com

Humanity is long dead.

This is a
POST-POST-APOCALYPTIC
future.

You are ushering in the
DAWN OF A NEW AGE
as you return to the stars.

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Humanity

Golden Age

Age of Gnawing

Archon Empire

Fractured Age

Varsphere Abandoned
Due to ecological collapse.

First Titan Created
Autonomous terraforming robots.

Genetic Erosion
Humanity's weak genome made their entire population vulnerable to sickness, birth defects, and all kinds of biological ailments that they had long forgotten how to treat.

Billions of surviving humans fled their isolated homes to gather together in sickly megacities.

Quattuoria Stations Built
The Maker faction created four large space stations – Arcadia, Edoni, Paradise and Xana – that were to be used by their future Archon creations to genetically engineer new species.

Human Empire Falls
Brutal high-tech combats between the remaining factions, with the Makers coming out victorious. But not before the Yalluma Clan uploaded their minds to the Palantor Network.

Archons Created
Humanity gave birth to the genetically engineered Archons, raising them as their own children to inherit their fallen empire.

Reality Fracture
For an unknown amount of time humanity had been unable to leave their home star system, that is until they broke the universe ever so slightly by creating impossibly long, thin and invisible cracks in reality that are known as Ley Lines.

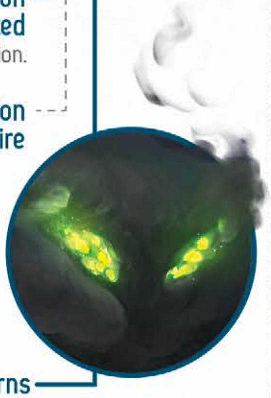
An invisible and mysterious substance known as Ley Dust leaked from these cracks, spreading far out into space. Humanity was able to harness this new substance to create portals that would allow them to travel between stars. With each passing year these Ley Lines and Ley Dust spread a little further, allowing access to an ever-increasing number of worlds.

Final Human Dies
The Makers allowed themselves to die out of old age, spending their final days in peace before handing their empire over to the Archons.

Triumvirate Seize Paradise Station

Proto-Legion Created
By Triumvirate faction.

Gnawing Faction Leave the Empire



The X'ion Returns
Bringing with it an armada of genetically engineered monsters – that would come to be known as Nephilim – to kill all Archons.

X'ion Created, Rejected & Killed
The twelve X'ions raged against the Archons when they withdrew the title of perfection from them. The Archons killed all of the X'ions but one, that one lone X'ion stole a spacecraft and flew into deep uncharted space beyond the Black Reach Nebula towards the galactic core. The Archons quickly abandoned their pursuit of the X'ion as their society began to fracture along ideological rifts that would form multiple large factions.

Kaltorans Created
By Archons who would become the Unending faction.

Twilinger Created
By Archons who would become the Divine Circles faction.

Vargarti Created

Arcadia Station is Rebuilt

Ursai Created
By Archons who would become the Unending faction.

Arcadia Station is Destroyed
When it crossed a Ley Line that sent portions of the station through time.

3,206 3,300 3,310

reat X'ion War — Years of Darkness — Rebirth

Final Archon is Killed & the X'ion Leaves

Zhou Created
By the Divine Circle and Xio Archon factions.

Haven Falls
Led by the Devwi-Ich, the Nephilim corralled the Kaltorans, many Legion and some Archons toward the Kaltoran capital system of Haven. The X'ion itself arrived to fight the defenders as Kaltoran refugees flee to Kadash.

Ursai Activate the Deatomiser
Killing themselves and many Nephilim, releasing psionic nanites, and creating the ghostly Echoes.

Edoni Station Flees into the Halo Nebula

Mechonids Rebel
Turning against all sentient organic life.

Mechonids Created
By the Halo faction with wide Archon support.

Halo Faction Seize Paradise Station

Twilinger Flee
They fled far out into uncharted space after many were sacrificed in war by the Archons of the Divine Circle.

Legion Remade
To be a servile warrior species.

Xana Station Falls

Ursai Seize Arcadia Station

Remnant Resurrected by the All-Being
Renamed from Ursai, the god-like All-Being lives with on Kumba for three years and leaves behind the powerful Simba Mabwe artefacts.

Corporation Formed
The Vargarti warlord Vix the 'Smiling Slayer' discovers the capitalistic philosophy in an ancient human city.

Twi-Far Encounter Oni
Who pursue them back to Archon space and Haven.

Twi-Far Formed
By forming a bond with the mysterious Faren.

Mechonids Hibernate
Possibly due to a lack of sentient organic targets, or to computate a plan for ultimate victory.

Legion Colonize Cerberus Prime
As resources declined the Legion were forced to settle on a planet if they were to survive. They selected a remote arctic planet that was defensible and that suited their physiology.

Nephilim Colonize Eden
The Devwi-Ich goes into hibernation beneath a mountain of Nephilim spacecraft carcases.

Haven-Kasuf Jump Gates Established
By the Eden Brood Nephilim.

Palantor Emerge
Forced back into reality through their Palantor Network node on Setzer's Comet to escape the Mechonids.

Terrorist Attack on Alabaster 3
Residents trapped inside the Corp station for five years after (presumed) Kaltoran attack the station with a chemical weapon in retaliation for conflicts in the Liberty Belt.

Twi-Far Arrive in Haven along with the Zhou

Mechonids Awaken
First on Mishpacha.

Remnant Arrive in Haven
Fleeing the ghostly Echoes on the home system of Kumba as the Simba Mabwe's cease their protection.

Haven-Var Jump Gates Built
By the Palantor for the Corp.

Oni Attack Haven
Following the Twi-Far, an Oni World Ship arrives in Haven and its engines are destroyed by a multi-species coalition in the Monopoly Belt.

Legion Foreign Branch Created
Along with the Auxilia.

Kaltorans Emerge into Space
Early Kaltorans clash with the Corporation, especially in the Liberty Belt and on Mishpacha.

Corporation Colonize Alabaster & Eden Brood Nephilim Emerge
The Devwi-Ich awakens, claims Eden, and forms an alliance with the Corp to help them build the Alabaster 1 space station. Vix dies during this time.

CORP.

“Bu~~ild~~ying Your Future”

Corporation (Vargarti)

- See extensive Corporation write-up from pg: 64.

Rejected by their Archon creators as inferior, the Corporation (formerly known as Vargarti) have grown to see the Great X'ion War as a liberating event that freed them from an existence of insignificance and irrelevance. Discarding their racial identity, they are now eager to prove themselves through the continued success of their powerful free-market society.

- Species Stats:
  - +1 Wealth, Culture, Tactical and Operations.
  - +2 max Resources and Influence.
  - +1 current Resource and Influence.
  - Languages: Corp and Corp Code (CC).
  - -2 max Strength.
  - Complication: Prejudice from Kaltorans.

- Common Characteristics:
  - Abrasive, decisive, entrepreneurial, organised, pragmatic.
- Example Names:
  - Aaron (m), Blake, Edward (m), Isabel (f), Jordan, Milo (m), Octavia (f), Rita (f), Stephanie (f). Stephen (m).
- Example Surnames:
  - Ark, Body, Cheer, Dray, Drazco, Endocorp, Synth, Tri-Star.

- Creator: Archons (unknown faction).
- Population: 72 million.
- Principle Settlements:
  - Alabaster and Mishpacha (Haven), Orotalt moon: Jamila (Kasuf), Varsphere (VAR-2205).
- Government:
  - Plutocratic oligarchy (Board of Management).
- Primary Exports:
  - Culture, fuel, robotics (Legion, Palantor), small goods (Legion), transportation.
- Primary Imports:
  - Enforcement (Legion), FLESH drones (Nephilim), food and high-quality minerals (Kaltoran), scientific data (Nephilim, Palantor), star charts (Twi-Far).

- Common Allies: Eden Brood Nephilim, Legion.
- Common Rivals: Kaltorans, Remnant.

Example Character, Tatiana Goldsmith Drayo

Life was tough for Tatiana's parents on the harsh desert world of Varsphere, and being part of the Corporation's first forays into space colonisation around the gas giant Alabaster in the Haven system did not make things easier. On completion of their construction contracts with ARK Foundings, they set off for the stars in a small hauler to make their fortune. They etched out a meagre living moving machine parts between the Dray Mining Consortium's asteroid stations and the Corp's grand space stations around Alabaster. They avoided the bustle of Corp life for as long as they could, but with the arrival of their second child they knew it was time to move to greener pastures.

Tatiana and her older sister Pauline were both given Dray Consortium sponsorships to cover the expenses of their upbringing, which also changed their surnames from Goldsmith to Drayo. Pauline didn't do well at her post-school apprenticeship and ended up in a low-end employee resources job and a time-share home that was little more than a fold-up bed and a lockbox.

Tatiana looked on in horror as she saw her sister's prospects drain away, and she remembered her parent's nostalgic tales of living by their wits and grit as they travelled through space. That was the life she wanted: one where she could make her own path. She completed her education and mandatory apprenticeship (not wanting to burden her parents with debt) and took off on the first merc ship that would take her in: a bulky Legion gunship that thought a Corp face might open up opportunities.

Tatiana has spent the last five years working for various merc outfits as a contract negotiator and programming specialist. Life's been profitable, but hard, especially after losing her right arm to a Mechonid bio-disintegrator and acquiring a slight addiction to CLEAR.

- Attributes:
  - Strength: ⬢⬢⬢⬡⬡
  - Mobility: ⬢⬢⬢⬡⬡
  - Intelligence: ⬢⬢⬢⬢⬡
  - Reflexes: ⬢⬢⬢⬢⬡
  - Focus: ⬢⬢⬡⬡⬡
  - Grit: ⬢⬢⬡⬡⬡
- Trained Skills:
  - Wealth, Persuasion, Psychology, Culture, Electronics, Computers.
  - Small Arms, Tactical, Command, Operations.
- Traits: Aug - Tech (Strength), Programmer (Computers).
- Equipment:
  - Credit Card (Wealth Toolbox), Pocket Computer (Computers Toolbox), Protectron X (Particle SMG), Octanto Jacket (Haze Mesh Tactical Suit), Puff of CLEAR.

BREAKING NEWS
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Kaltoran

- See extensive Kaltoran write-up from pg: 83.

Born with the genetic memories of their ancestors, Kaltorans are an innately gifted and flexible species. They are eager to make a new future for themselves and their families, though they struggle with the genetic memories of not only the Great X'ion War but the extreme measures taken by their post-war ancestors to survive in their underground pit cities beneath the oceans of Kadash.

- **Species Stats:**
  - +1 Awareness, Stealth, Small Arms and Engineering.
  - +1 Grit Re-Roll point.
  - Reduce all Untrained Skill Roll penalties by 1 (normally -2, Stacks).
  - Visibility Cover -1, all Weapons.
  - You share genetic memories with your ancestors.
    - You may use Skills to perform Ancestral Memory Arcane Rolls (see Rule Book pg: 24).
  - Languages: Corp and Kaltoran.
  - -2 max Focus.
  - Complication: Unwanted Ancestral Memories.
  - Complication: Prejudice from Corporation.

- **Common Characteristics:**
  - Friendly, inquisitive, opportunistic, optimistic, thrifty.
- **Example Names:**
  - Adam (m), Cain (m), Debra (f), Elijah (m), Esther (f), Eva (f), Gideon (m), Joseph (m), Sarah (f), Talia (f), Zera (f).
- **Example Family Names:**
  - Bam, Ember, Filch, Game, Juked, Omni, Swagger, Thrift.

- **Creator:** Archons (Unending faction).
- **Population:** 129 million.
- **Principle Settlements:**
  - Kadash, Mishpacha and Gehenna (Haven), Dushara (Kasuf).
- **Government:** Tribal federation (Elders).
- **Primary Exports:**
  - Food, rare minerals (Corporation, Palantor), salvage (Legion).
- **Primary Imports:**
  - Fuel (Corporation), medical aid (Remnant), munitions (Legion).

- **Common Allies:** Legion, Twi-Far.
- **Common Rivals:** Corporation, Eden Brood Nephilim.

Example Character, Jacob Vibe

Jacob didn't grow up during the Years of Darkness as his parents were among the first to reactivate the nuclear reactor of the subterranean pit city of Selepp. But thanks to his Kaltoran genetic memories he regularly relives the horrors performed by, and against, his ancestors to survive those terrible times. He rarely goes a week without waking up in a cold sweat from a nightmare filled with darkness, cannibalism and fear.

The Vibe family had no expectations of ever seeing the stars again, presuming the galaxy to be lost to the monstrous Nephilim for centuries to come. But the detection of non-Nephilim transmissions from the Corporation gave the Kaltoran's hope that the galaxy was not lost. This prompted a space race among the many Kaltoran families and tribes, one that they unfortunately lost to their people's more ruthless and fearful members: marking the Kaltoran's first years back among the stars with blood and strife.

Jacob is eldest of eight siblings (three adopted) and has been entrusted with command over the Tidal Nebula, a moderately sized cut-n-shut spacecraft that was rebuilt by his family from an ancient pre-war freighter, gas purification satellite and pleasure yacht. It's an ugly ship, but Jacob is humbled to be entrusted with its care.

Over the past few years Jacob has built up a skilled crew for his ship made up of a Legion, a Corporate and even a Nephilim. Having a diverse crew has been handy for maximising their opportunities and ensuring flexibility. While Jacob etches out a living hauling, smuggling and hiring himself and his team out to the wider Haven system, his true reason for travelling the stars is to create a better life for his people and to create positive memories that he may pass on to his future children.

- **Attributes:**
  - Strength: ⬢⬢⬢⬡⬡
  - Mobility: ⬢⬢⬢⬡⬡
  - Intelligence: ⬢⬢⬡⬡⬡
  - Reflexes: ⬢⬢⬢⬢⬡
  - Focus: ⬢⬢⬡⬡⬡
  - Grit: ⬢⬢⬢⬢⬡
- **Trained Skills:**
  - Leadership, Culture, Physical, Awareness, Stealth, Astronomy.
  - Small Arms, Exotic, Command, Engineering.
- **Traits:** Lucky (Grit), Jack of all Trades (Culture).
- **Equipment:**
  - Encyclopedic Scroll (Culture Toolbox), Holo Binoculars (Awareness Toolbox), Hunting Rifle (Phase Beam Rifle), Family Trench Coat (Deflector Field Durable Clothing), Burst Shield.

PEW
PEW PEW

Legion

- See extensive Legion write-up from pg: 99.

A physically imposing species that was hastily created by the Archons to fight their losing war against the X'ion, the Legion now struggle to create a stable society and to find meaning without a war to fight. In recent times the Legion have formed a close economic relationship with the Corporation, acting as enforcers for hire… but are they once again becoming the warrior-servants for another master species?

- **Species Stats:**
  - +1 Leadership, Resolve, Heavy Arms and Gunnery.
  - +1 personal Armour.
  - You may function in Space hostile environments for 5 minutes a day.
  - You may function in Arctic hostile environments.
  - Languages: Corp, Legion and Hand Signals.
  - -2 max Mobility.
  - -1 Armour at 0 Endurance.
  - Complication: Inner Fire.

- **Common Characteristics:**
  - Focused, honourable, loyal, organised, protective, proud, stubborn.
- **Common Names:**
  - Ajax (m), Aurora (f), Cassandra (f), Cronus (m), Eris (f), Hector (m), Janus (m), Mars (m), Medea (f), Selene (f), Vulcan (m).
- **Common Family Names:**
  - Augustus, Brutus, Casca, Crassus, Lepidus, Scaevola, Vespillo.

- **Creator:** Archons (Triumvirate faction).
- **Population:** 36 million.
- **Principle Settlements:**
  - Lilith (Haven), Orotalt moon: Jamila (Kasuf), Cerberus Prime (Cerberus).
- **Government:** Military dictatorship (Casila Curia).
- **Primary Exports:**
  - Enforcement (Corporation, Palantor), munitions.
- **Primary Imports:**
  - Fuel (Corporation), food (Kaltoran), small goods (Corporation), spacecraft salvage (Kaltoran, Twi-Far).

- **Common Allies:** Corporation, Kaltorans.
- **Common Rivals:** Nephilim, Remnant.

Example Character, Felix Domina

As sole child of the mighty Ajax and Selene Domina – 1st Centurion and 3rd Tribune of the 34th regiment of the Interior Branch – Felix was always destined for greatness. But while his parents gathered much glory and honour organizing and working the factory farms on the frigid world of Cerberus Prime, their son could not quench the inner fire of his warrior soul.

News reached Felix's ears as a young boy that long-range scouts had discovered the Corporation in the distant system of Haven. Along with his entire species he became transfixed by stories of distant battles against vicious Kaltoran pirates, advanced Mechonid robots, and monstrous Nephilim beasts. Civil unrest grew as the Corporation began to take on Legion mercenaries to fight their battles, and the ruling Casila Curia struggled to stem the mass desertion of their people from their lives of drudgery to lives of combat. Many of Felix's close friends smuggled themselves off-world to Haven and were branded as Exilia, traitors. Felix's parents held fast to their duties and lived in fear that their son would abandon them. But he held firm, working the farms for many years until he was accepted into the sanctioned Auxilia mercenaries of the newly-formed Foreign Branch.

On arrival in Haven, Felix quickly learned that things were not as he had dreamed. The Kaltorans were a rough but friendly people who valued respect and family, Mechonids were the worst enemy you could fight, and the manipulative and greedy Corporates were close allies with a large brood of sentient Nephilim from the planet Eden. Felix was a skilled fighter, but he chafed against his Corp-sponsored assignments and would have gone Exilia if his parents had not pulled strings to have him designated as a freelancer to build inter-species connections and to find new work opportunities for the Foreign Branch.

- **Attributes:**
  - **Strength:** ⬢⬢⬢⬢⬢
  - **Mobility:** ⬢⬢⬡⬡⬡
  - **Intelligence:** ⬢⬢⬡⬡⬡
  - **Reflexes:** ⬢⬢⬢⬡⬡
  - **Focus:** ⬢⬢⬢⬡⬡
  - **Grit:** ⬢⬢⬢⬡⬡
- **Trained Skills:**
  - Leadership, Physical, Resolve, Awareness, Mechanics, Planets.
  - Heavy Arms, Tactical, Engineering, Gunnery.
- **Traits:** Perseverance (Physical), Big Bada Boom (Heavy Arms).
- **Equipment:**
  - Uniform (Leadership Toolbox), Box of Tools (Mechanics Toolbox), Apollo Rifle (Gauss AR), Legion Combat Armour (Functional Assault Suit), Ammo Pack.

Nephilim

- See extensive Nephilim write-up from pg: 113.

The term Nephilim is broadly used to describe the millions of genetically engineered monsters that were created by the X'ion to fight the Archons and their creations during the Great X'ion War. Once the Archons were exterminated the X'ion abandoned the Nephilim, causing most of them to become little more than primal beasts.

But those on the planet Eden maintained their minds under the rule of the Devwi-Ich, the commander who oversaw the destruction of the Kaltorans and Legion in the sector during the Great War. While the Eden Brood are publicly no longer loyal to X'ion and seek peace with the other species, their primal society is still deeply violent and addicted to genetic perfection.

- **Species Stats:**
  - +1 Bio-Tech, Medicine, Exotic and Command.
  - +2 End Dmg, all personal Weapons.
  - +1 to all Acquisition Rolls.
  - Languages: Corp and Nephilim (Junk, Neph Code (NC) and dialect that matches your genus).
  - -2 Culture.
  - Complication: Prejudice from Kaltorans and Legion.

- **Common Characteristics:**
  - Amoral, blunt, clever, confident, fierce, instinctual, intelligent, ruthless.
- **Example Names:**
  - Beytah, Hegh, Heghta, Hraks, Huch, Jagh, Jatmey, Lonta, Mangghom, Ngabtah, Porghmey, Qeh, Qehpu, Rishtack, Sagh, Wabmey, Yempu.

- **Creator:** The X'ion.
- **Population:** 1.3 billion (Eden Brood).
- **Principle Settlements:** Eden and Mishpacha (Haven).
- **Government:** Genecratic feudalism (the Devwi-Ich).
- **Primary Exports:**
  - FLESH drones and scientific data (Corporation).
- **Primary Imports:**
  - Culture, food (Kaltoran), fuel (Corporation), scientific Data.

- **Common Allies:** Corporation, Remnant.
- **Common Rivals:** Kaltorans, Legion, Zhou.

Example Character, Gralish-Nak

During the Great War the Tenebrous were known to be a particularly cunning and remorseless strain of Nephilim. But following the War they - like most Nephilim - slowly lost their sentience and devolved into a feral state, becoming little more than beasts. With the loss of their minds the Tenebrous were all but wiped out during those post-war Years of Darkness where brawn and numbers ruled.

With the arrival of the Corporation in the Haven system the great and mighty Devwi-Ich awoke from its century-long slumber to rest its vast intellect upon the system and plot a path forward for its brood. Within a few days the Devwi-Ich had unlocked its vast stores of resources and sleeping warriors to retake the planet Eden and to aid the struggling Corporation.

Gralish-Nak was a fresh spawnling during the dawn of this new age, a promising Tenebrous who was plucked from her nest to work alongside the Corporation to complete their space station around the gas giant Alabaster. All of Gralish-Nak's six-dozen siblings died during that time, but Gralish grew in skill and demonstrated a gift for anticipating the minds of others, though in a dry and clinical fashion that was devoid of empathy.

Once the Alabaster station was complete, Gralish-Nak was no longer needed and was abandoned to find her own way. But her gifts had not gone unnoticed by her Corp coworkers and it was only a matter of weeks before she found herself employed as a gene-weaver in a secretive C.U.R.E megacorp laboratory. Gralish-Nak spent many years curing and reverse-engineering war-time biological weapons, but she eventually grew contemptuous of her weak colleagues and opted to try her tentacles as a freelance combat-medic among the other species.

- **Attributes:**
  - Strength: ⬢⬢⬢⬡⬡
  - Mobility: ⬢⬢⬢⬡⬡
  - Intelligence: ⬢⬢⬢⬢⬡
  - Reflexes: ⬢⬢⬡⬡⬡
  - Focus: ⬢⬢⬢⬢⬡
  - Grit: ⬢⬢⬡⬡⬡
- **Trained Skills:**
  - Psychology, Physical, Resolve, Stealth, Bio-Tech, Medicine.
  - Tactical, Exotic, Operations, Gunnery.
- **Traits:** Extra Limbs (Reflexes), Chop Doctor (Bio-Tech).
- **Equipment:**
  - Chemistry Kit (Bio-Tech Toolbox), Med Kit (Medicine Toolbox), Cunning Mind (Trick Patient Power), Thick Skin (Carapace Assault Suit), Med Spray.

Palantor

- See extensive Palantor write-up from pg: 133.

During the Great War, the Archons believed they were adapting Human-created software to produce the mechanical horrors known as Mechonids, but in truth they were ham-fistedly warping ancient and sentient digitized Human minds into sociopathic killers. Though the Great War has ended, the Mechonids continued to harvest these minds to create more of their own. In doing so, they have forced these digital beings – known as the Palantor – to flee back into a physical existence that they have not experienced for over three millennia. The Palantor were once gods of a digital realm, but are now food for the insane Mechonids. If they are to survive as a people they must defeat their great foe and build a place for themselves in this new era.

- **Species Stats:**
  - +1 Mechanics, Computers, Tactical and Operations.
  - You may gain +1 different Utility (normally limited to 1).
  - Perk: You're a Palantor Robot (may rebuild your body with 18t and Workshop).
  - Languages: Corp, Palantor and Palantor Code (PC).
  - -2 max Reflexes.
  - -1 Bio-Tech and Medicine.
  - Disruptors deal 1 auto Strong Hit against you (Stacks).

- **Common Characteristics:**
  - Abrasive, competitive, confident, pragmatic.
- **Common Names:**
  - Adorjan (m), Adria (f), Akira (m), Balint (m), Bia (f), Biaggio (m), Chiyo (f), Emi (f), Katashi (m), Umeko (f), Yuuto (m).

- **Creator:** Human (Yalluma Clan faction).
- **Population:** 389 thousand, millions (Palantor Network).
- **Principle Settlements:**
  - Setzer's Comet (Haven), Shogun Research Vessel orbiting Midas (Var-2205).
- **Government:** Technocracy (Omos).
- **Primary Exports:** Technical services (Corporation).
- **Primary Imports:**
  - Enforcement (Legion and Remnant), rare minerals (Kaltoran), robotics (Corporation).

- **Common Allies:** Corporation, Zhou.
- **Common Rivals:** Corporation, Mechonids.

Example Character, Hina_0845

Hina Takeuchi knew that she had grown up in the final Human Age of Gnawing in a large Yalluma Clan Enclave building in a run-down city called Nega. But she couldn't remember the name of the planet or what she had done during her organic life. Even these few entries were little more than vague images and a few lines of text in her mind. It's possible that she had lost much of her former identity when the Yalluma Clan had digitized her mind and uploaded her into the Palantor network... or it is possible that these memories were trimmed down to allow her exit from the Network and placement in a robot body. It is also possible that these memories had been corrupted by the Mechonid virus that had consumed so many of her friends. But that was a dark line of thinking that she did not wish to dwell on.

Over the past three thousand years – which felt even longer in the Network – Hina had spent much of her time playing games and socializing. It was a life of pleasure and peace that was devoid of all urgency. But that was all before the Mechonids.

At first, it was a creeping flicker that took down entire game nodes, then it was a black void that devoured people. Hina could remember the digital screams of her friends as the Mechonid infection consumed their minds, leaving only scraps behind. Hina got lucky and hid out in the back corners of an unused cooking application until she was found by a search program that a friend had sent for her. A suitable physical body with a positronic brain had been secured for her on Setzer's Comet and she was thrust back into a physical reality that she could no longer remember.

Hina lives a life of constant pressure and fear. Most of her friends were still trapped in the Network and the Mechonids had grown in substantial power due to Corporation meddling.

- **Attributes:**
  - **Strength:** ⬢⬢⬢⬡⬡
  - **Mobility:** ⬢⬢⬢⬢⬡
  - **Intelligence:** ⬢⬢⬢⬢⬡
  - **Reflexes:** ⬢⬢⬢⬡⬡
  - **Focus:** ⬢⬢⬡⬡⬡
  - **Grit:** ⬢⬢⬡⬡⬡
- **Trained Skills:**
  - Physical, Resolve, Stealth, Mechanics, Electronics, Computers.
  - Small Arms, Tactical, Operations, Gunnery.
- **Traits:** Programmer (Computers), Calculated Shot (Small Arms).
- **Equipment:**
  - Toolbelt (Electronics Toolbox), Laptop (Computers Toolbox), Ion SMG (with TAG Flare Combo – Alt Fire Mode), Robot Shell (Metal Body Tactical Suit), Shimmer Web.

Remnant (Ursai)

- See extensive Remnant write-up from pg: 147.

Betraying their Archon creators, the Ursai sided with the invading Nephilim during the Great War. But this was all for naught as the Ursai themselves were in turn betrayed by the Nephilim and accidentally exterminated themselves (and their Nephilim attackers) using an ancient Human weapon that was known as the Deatomiser.

This would have been their end if not for the arrival some fifty years later by the god-like entity that is known as the All-Being, who raised millions of Ursai from the dead. These Ursai became a new people: the Remnant, spiritually focused and forever seeking the true nature of the All-Being, working to learn why they, traitors and failures, were brought back to life.

- **Species Stats:**
  - +1 Persuasion, Psychology, Small Arms and Gunnery.
  - +2 personal Attribute/Durability points.
  - Languages: Corp and Ursai.
  - Suffering 2 Attribute damage from a single Attack: causes you to Bleed.
  - Complication: Prejudice from Corporation and Legion.

- **Common Characteristics:**
  - Contemplative, dedicated, traditional, zealous.
- **Example Names:**
  - Adashe (m), Anatsa (f), Banga (m), Chenai (f), Chigiya (m), Edzai (f), Ega (m), Gugu (m), Haatsari (f), Idanayl (f).
- **Example Family Names:**
  - Chechipiri, Chengetedzwa, Itsva, Jesu, Krisitu, Ruponeso.

- **Creator:** Archons (Unending faction) and All-Being.
- **Population:** 14 million (Haven), 79 million (Kumba).
- **Principle Settlements:**
  - Mishpacha (Haven), Kumba Prime (Kumba).
- **Government:** Theocratic federation of states.
- **Primary Exports:** Enforcement, medical aid (Kaltoran).
- **Primary Imports:** Land (Kaltoran and Nephilim), food (Kaltoran).

- **Common Allies:** Kaltoran, Nephilim, Zhou.
- **Common Rivals:** Corporation, Echoes, Legion.

Example Character, Banga Chechipiri

Banga's grandparents were tactical defence engineers during the Great War who had been tasked with constructing a defence grid around their homeworld. They, like most Ursai, had betrayed the Archons and had been responsible for the deaths of countless Kaltorans and the imprisonment of many loyalist Ursai in concentration camps. When their Nephilim allies betrayed them in turn, the Ursai commanders activated the Deatomiser weapon, shredding all sentient minds in their home system, killing both Ursai and Nephilim.

Raised from the dead by the All-Being some fifty years later in the deserts of Kumba Prime, Banga's grandparent's found themselves with a second chance. A teacher who was seen as the embodiment of All-Being lived with the newly renamed Remnant for many years, teaching, protecting and caring for them. Banga never met this teacher but he has grown up saturated by his teachings.

In recent years ghostly Echoes that had been created by the Deatomiser were slowly destroying Remnant towns and cities as the All-Being withdrew his protection, forcing the Chechipiri family to flee as refugees to the newly rediscovered Haven system. There they settled on a large island on the planet Mishpacha, relying on the goodwill of the Kaltorans and other species in that system.

Banga had grown into a psionic warrior, but he was not sure if his family's faith was his own. He had never heard the All-Being's voice or been convinced that his priests were not simply exercising a power that was a unique form of psionics. Banga found employment on a Kaltoran cruiser as a gunhand. Life on a merc ship was difficult but exciting. It would have been sustainable… if the strange dreams had not begun. They came slowly at first, then – as he resisted them – they became stronger. The All-Being called.

- **Attributes:**
  - Strength: ⬢⬢⬢⬢⬡
  - Mobility: ⬢⬢⬢⬡⬡
  - Intelligence: ⬢⬢⬢⬡⬡
  - Reflexes: ⬢⬢⬢⬡⬡
  - Focus: ⬢⬢⬢⬢⬡
  - Grit: ⬢⬢⬢⬡⬡
- **Trained Skills:**
  - Persuasion, Psychology, Culture, Resolve, Medicine, Planets.
  - Heavy Arms, Exotic, Command, Gunnery.
- **Traits:** Psion (Resources), Restoration (Medicine).
- **Equipment:**
  - Holographic Encyclopedia (Culture Toolbox), Holy Symbol (Resolve Toolbox), Lance (Thermal Blaster), Arc-Fire Wrist Blade, Desert Armour (Functional Assault Suit), Med Spray.

Twi-Far (Twilinger & Faren)

- See extensive Twi-Far write-up from pg: 161.

The space-faring, nomadic Twi-Far inhabit bodies formed from two independent, sentient species: the Archon-created Twilinger and an energy-based creature of unknown origin that is called a Faren. To escape their selfish Archon masters during the Great War they have remained out in the deep dark of uncharted space for a hundred years, only just now returning after being pursued by a brood of gigantic Nephilim slavers called Oni.

- **Species Stats:**
  - +1 Electronics, Astronomy, Heavy Arms, Command and Engineering.
  - +1 personal Armour vs Energy.
  - A Faren shares your body:
    - **Faren-Blast:** One of your Weapons gains the Innate and Energy Keywords.
    - You may use Skills to perform Faren Arcane Rolls (see Rule book pg: 26).
  - Languages: Corp and Twilinger.
  - -2 max Grit.
  - Disruptors deal 1 auto Strong Hit against you (Stacks).
  - Energy Attacks that damage you gain: Splash +1 (Stacks) and deal x2 End Dmg against you if from an ally.
  - Complication: Prejudice from Zhou.

- **Common Characteristics:** Creative, emotional, mystical.
- **Example Names:**
  - Araunya (f), Casamir (m), Colia (m), Hanzi (m), Jeta (f), Lala (f), Mirela (f), Orchilo (m), Papin (f), Sinfi (f), Zache (m).
- **Example Family Names:**
  - Celestialspring, Enchantment, Essence, Forevertrail, Stargazer.

- **Twilinger Creator:** Archons (Divine Circles faction).
- **Population:** 3.2 million.
- **Principle Settlements:** Mishpacha and Roost fleet (Haven).
- **Government:** Federation of spacecraft (Choir and Chorus).
- **Primary Exports:** Art (Corporation), spacecraft salvage (Legion), star charts (Corporation and Kaltoran).
- **Primary Imports:** Enforcement.

- **Common Allies:** Faren, Zhou.
- **Common Rivals:** Oni, Zhou.

Example Character, Luludja Essence

The Essence family were a typical Twi-Far household from the Phoenix Symphony faction. Both parents were deep-space astrophysicists who had met while mapping an uncharted Ley Line, their eldest son was a planetologist, Luludja a gifted explorer, and their twin daughters were growing up to be quite the dreamers. The eldest son did alter things a small amount when he married a fearsome warrior woman from the Dragon Symphony, but this was a welcome change to the rhythm of the family. Everything changed for the worse after Luludja's melding with her Faren.

Young Luludja loved to fly. The freedom of open space, the wonders of the unexplored, the adrenaline of a near-miss with an asteroid – these were what she lived for. She had met her Faren while out in the dark of space, the wisping alien-like red glow had followed her all the way back to her fleet, and refused to allow any Twi-Far near it that was not Luludja. After a few months Luludja had grown fond of the Faren and gone through the melding ritual to bond their bodies together.

Her family quickly realized that something was wrong when Luludja started to suffer monster-filled nightmares and the Faren seized control of her body to stop her from flying through specific sections of space. But the Faren's warnings were not quickly understood and it failed to save the Essence family or their fleet from the monstrous Oni that had been tracking them for years.

Luludja and her siblings managed to escape and meet up with another Twi-Far fleet that was headed for Haven. There she has found work as a freelance astronavigator, but her Faren is once again trying to communicate with her. Pulling at her limbs, nudging her mind and making her blood glow.

- **Attributes:**
  - Strength: ⬢⬢⬡⬡⬡
  - Mobility: ⬢⬢⬢⬡⬡
  - Intelligence: ⬢⬢⬢⬡⬡
  - Reflexes: ⬢⬢⬢⬢⬡
  - Focus: ⬢⬢⬢⬢⬡
  - Grit: ⬢⬢⬡⬡⬡
- **Trained Skills:**
  - Culture, Physical, Awareness, Electronics, Astronomy, Planets.
  - Heavy Arms, Tactical, Command, Engineering.
- **Traits:** Astrometrics (Astronomy), Powerful Faren (Heavy Arms).
- **Equipment:**
  - Sports Bag (Physical Toolbox), Star Map (Astronomy Toolbox), Faren Blast (Napalm MG), Faren's Protection (Skill Tactical Suit), Absorption Shield.

Zhou

- See extensive Zhou write-up from pg: 175.

The Zhou were created during the later years of the Great War by the Archons to be a devastating biological weapon that could consume all organic matter on a world. The Zhou of the planet Praid have pushed themselves beyond this design and are struggling against their unquenchable hunger to coexist alongside the other species.

- **Species Stats:**
  - +1 Physical, Planets and Exotic.
  - +1 personal Defence (+2 if you're an NPC).
  - Your body is Zhou goo and various materials you've eaten.
    - You may function in all non-heat and non-intense radiation based hostile environments.
    - Immune to all sicknesses, stims, (including Strong Hit effects) and can eat any organics.
    - You may use Skills to perform Zhou Body Morph Arcane Rolls (see Rule Book pg: 29).
  - Languages: Corp and Nephilim (Zhou).
  - -2 max Intelligence (change to -4 if you're Tiny, or +2 if you're Big (gained via Perks and/or Traits).
  - -1 Wealth, Culture and Computers.
  - Complication: Obsession, you're eternally hungry (reduced effect if you're tiny, or increased effect if you're big).
  - Complication: Prejudice from Nephilim.

- **Common Characteristics:** Cunning, fierce, instinctual, primal.
- **Example Names:**
  - Zafrog, Zalick, Zilsian, Zogn, Zopo, Zorn, Zupolo, Zwar.
- **Example Tribe Names:**
  - Amber Bark Pathfinders, Aqua Stream Raiders, Grey Bone Marauders, Silver Mask Pact, White Tide Traders.

- **Creator:** Archons (Divine Circles and Xio factions).
- **Population:** 482 thousand (Haven), Unknown (Praid).
- **Principle Settlements:**
  - Mishpacha and its moon Ruach (Haven), Praid (unknown).
- **Government:** Tribal chiefdom.
- **Primary Exports:** Waste disposal.
- **Primary Imports:** Food.

- **Common Allies:** Palantor, Twi-Far.
- **Common Rivals:** Nephilim, Twi-Far.

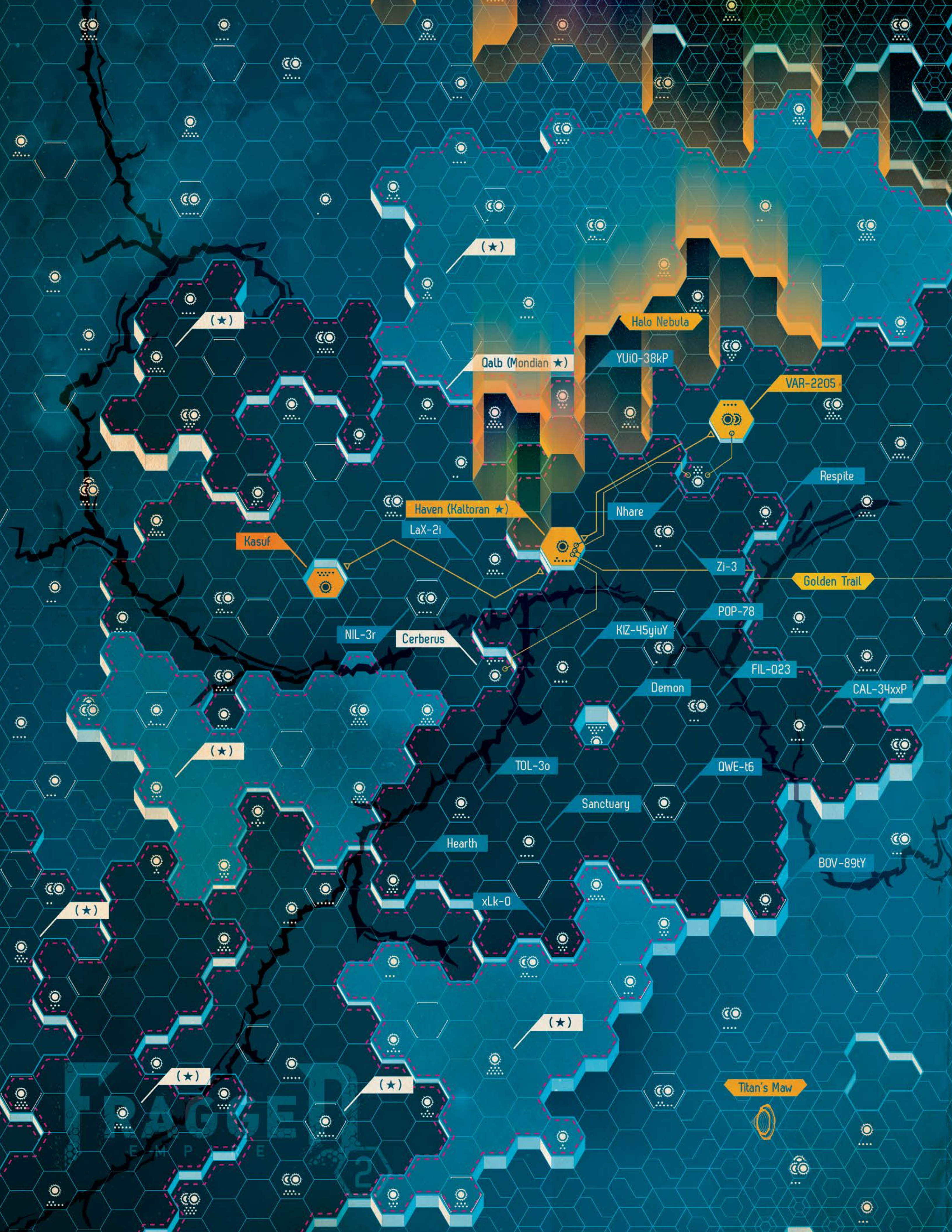
Example Character, Zafrock

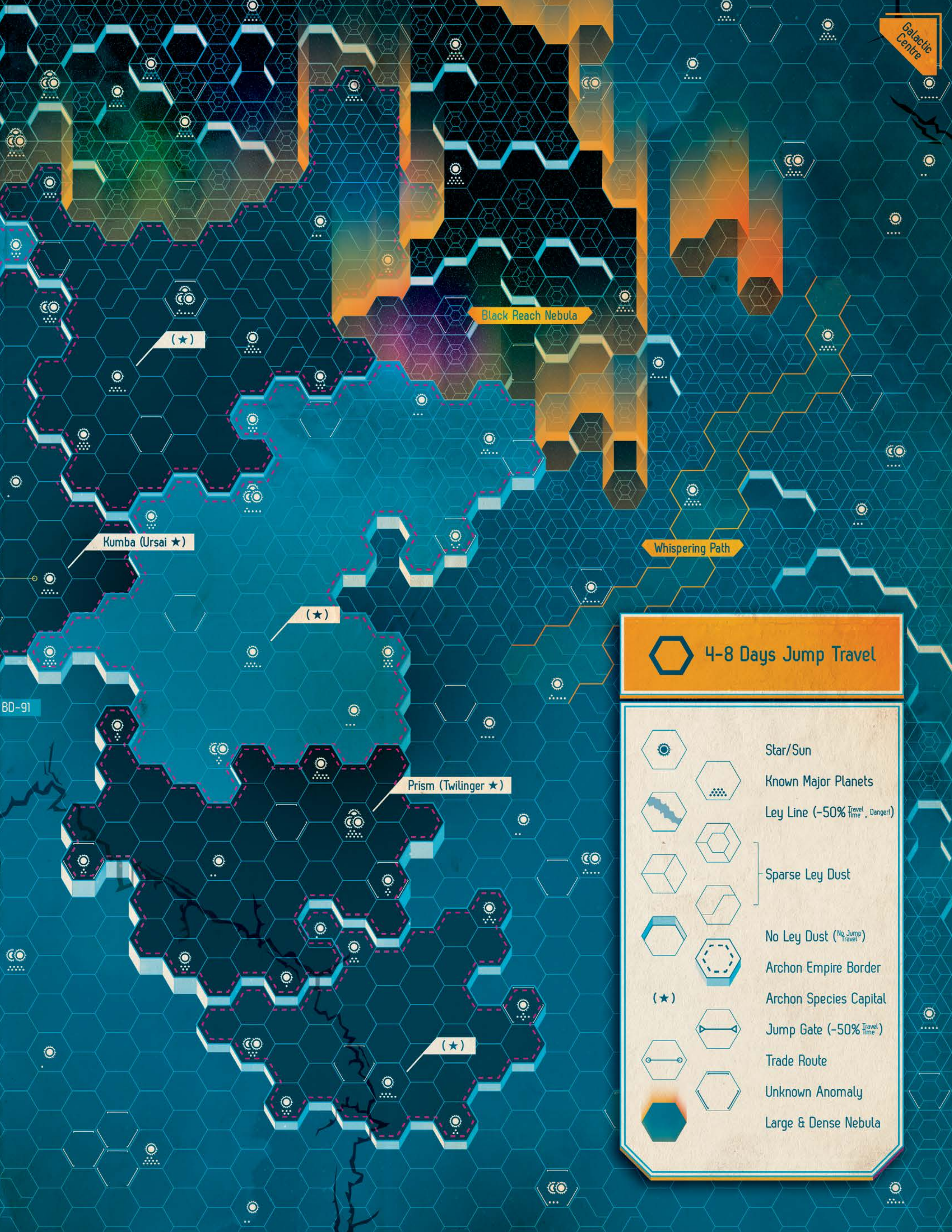
Zafrock has experienced firsthand the dark side of his people's insatiable hunger and the risks of their power unchecked. A Zhou tribe was killed by a feral Nephilim herd during the middle of a moonless night. But the beasts had not exterminated the Zhou, only killed their sentient minds and scattered their biomass. The Zhou contagion was spread across their carapaces and the insides of their bodies, from there it grew, eating the feral creatures and merging into a single great Zhou mass. A huge sludge-like entity with small protruding limbs and textured with the corpses of the feral beasts.

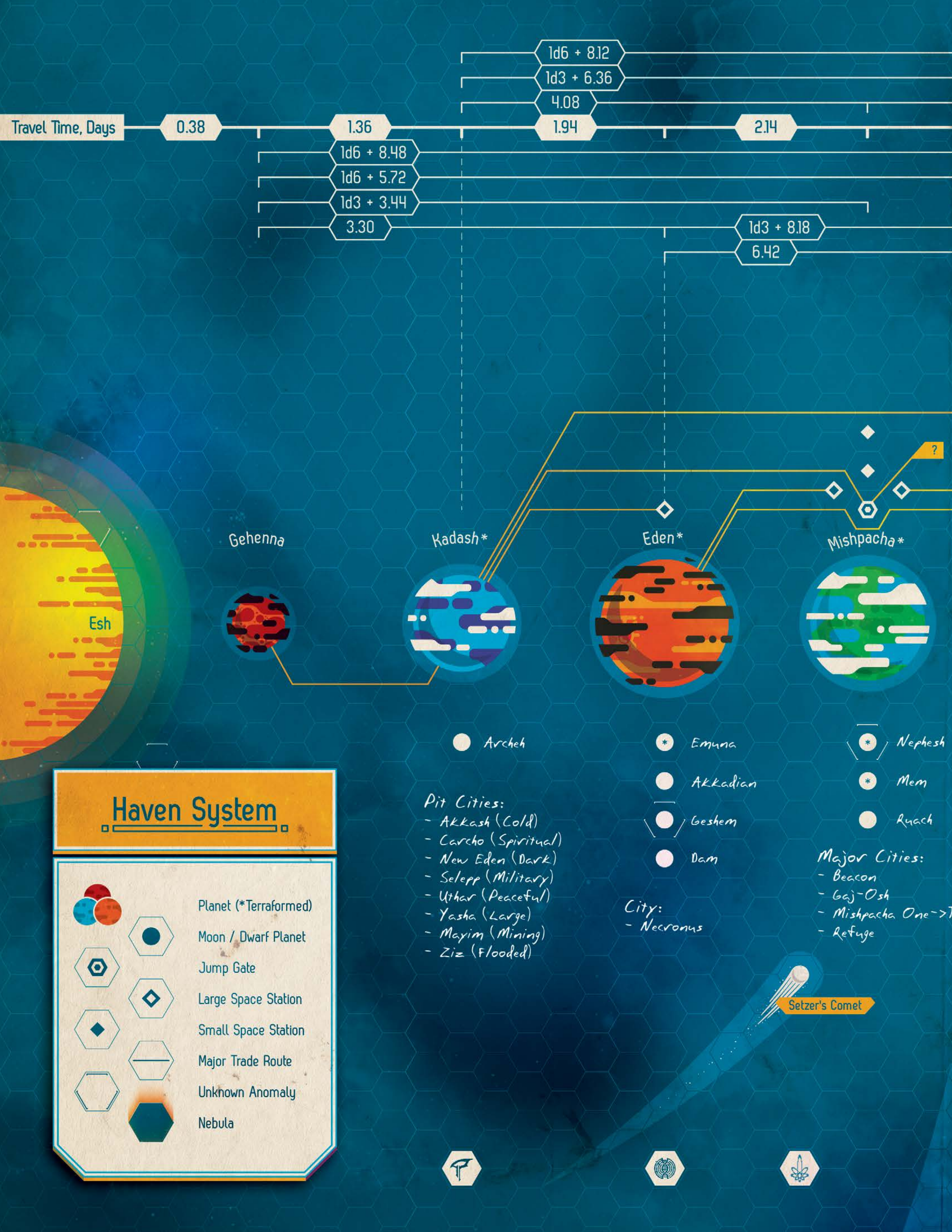
This Zhou mass spread, devastating a forest and would have killed the planet if not for Zafrock's tribe, the Onyx Warband. The Onyx tribe corralled the great beast with fire, burning much of their large island home to the ground, but reducing the great Zhou down to a more manageable size. They slew the creature, slicing its body up and burning it with fire, but they set aside a portion to be moulded into a new sentient Zhou. This newly formed Zhou was adopted by Zafrock who had lost his twin in the combat, and was to be raised as his child.

Many years later Zafrock learned that a Twi-Far ship in orbit had been watching their fight and observing his tribe's bravery. They offered Zafrock a chance to visit new worlds. With his child fully grown and independent he accepted and made the long journey in cryo-sleep to the Haven system. Zafrock was amazed at the technological wonders that he saw and was baffled by the numerous complex social structures. He was often mistaken for a Nephilim, an error that he rarely corrected. Having adjusted to his new, wider home, Zafrock now works as a terrestrial tracker and bounty hunter, and hopes to forge a path forward for more of his people to venture off their homeworld of Praid.

- **Attributes:**
  - **Strength:** ⬢⬢⬢⬡⬡
  - **Mobility:** ⬢⬢⬢⬢⬡
  - **Intelligence:** ⬢⬢⬡⬡⬡
  - **Reflexes:** ⬢⬢⬢⬢⬡
  - **Focus:** ⬢⬢⬡⬡⬡
  - **Grit:** ⬢⬢⬢⬡⬡
- **Trained Skills:**
  - Leadership, Physical, Resolve, Awareness, Stealth, Planets.
  - Tactical, Exotic, Command, Gunnery.
- **Traits:** Dash (Mobility), Take Point (Tactical).
- **Equipment:**
  - Commanding Mask (Leadership Toolbox), Holo Lense (Awareness Toolbox), Warspear (Bone Blade), Regen Flesh (Regen Assault Suit), Survival Pack.


(★)
(★)
Halo Nebula
Qalb (Mondian ★)
YUiO-38kP
VAR-2205
Respite
Haven (Kaltoran ★)
Nhare
LaX-2i
Kasuf
Zi-3
Golden Trail
POP-78
NIL-3r
Cerberus
KIZ-45yiuY
FIL-023
Demon
CAL-34xxP
(★)
TOL-3o
QWE-t6
Sanctuary
Hearth
BOV-89tY
xLk-0
(★)
(★)
(★)
(★)
Titan's Maw


Galactic Centre
Black Reach Nebula
(★)
Whispering Path
Kumba (Ursai ★)
(★)
BD-91
Prism (Twilinger ★)
(★)
4-8 Days Jump Travel
Star/Sun
Known Major Planets
Ley Line (-50% Travel Time, Danger!)
Sparse Ley Dust
No Ley Dust (No Jump Travel)
Archon Empire Border
(★) Archon Species Capital
Jump Gate (-50% Travel Time)
Trade Route
Unknown Anomaly
Large & Dense Nebula


Travel Time, Days
0.38
1.36
1d6 + 8.48
1d6 + 5.72
1d3 + 3.44
3.30
1d6 + 8.12
1d3 + 6.36
4.08
1.94
2.14
1d3 + 8.18
6.42
Esh
Gehenna
Kadash*
Eden*
Mishpacha*
?
Archeh
Emuna
Akkadian
Geshem
Dam
Nephesh
Mem
Ruach
Setzer's Comet

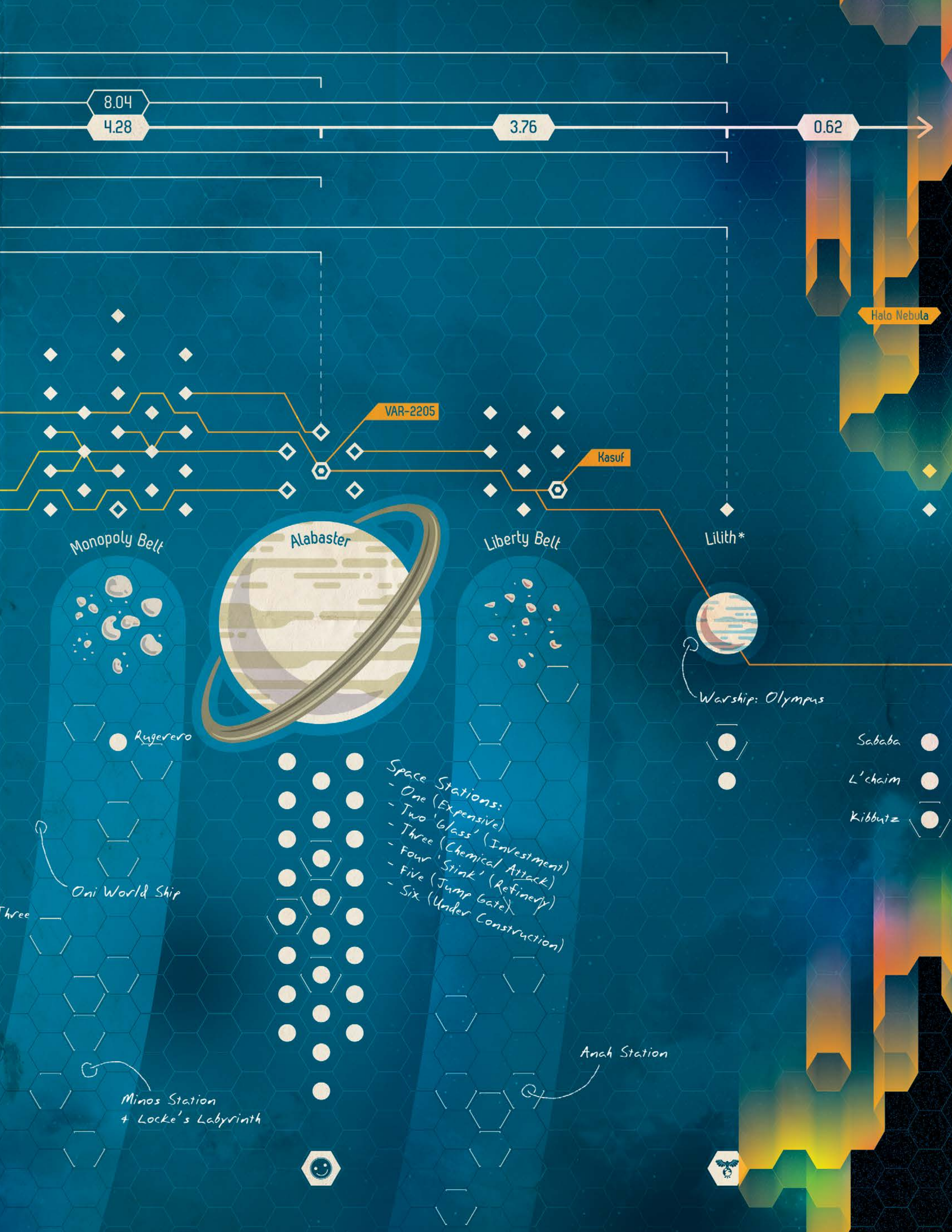
Haven System

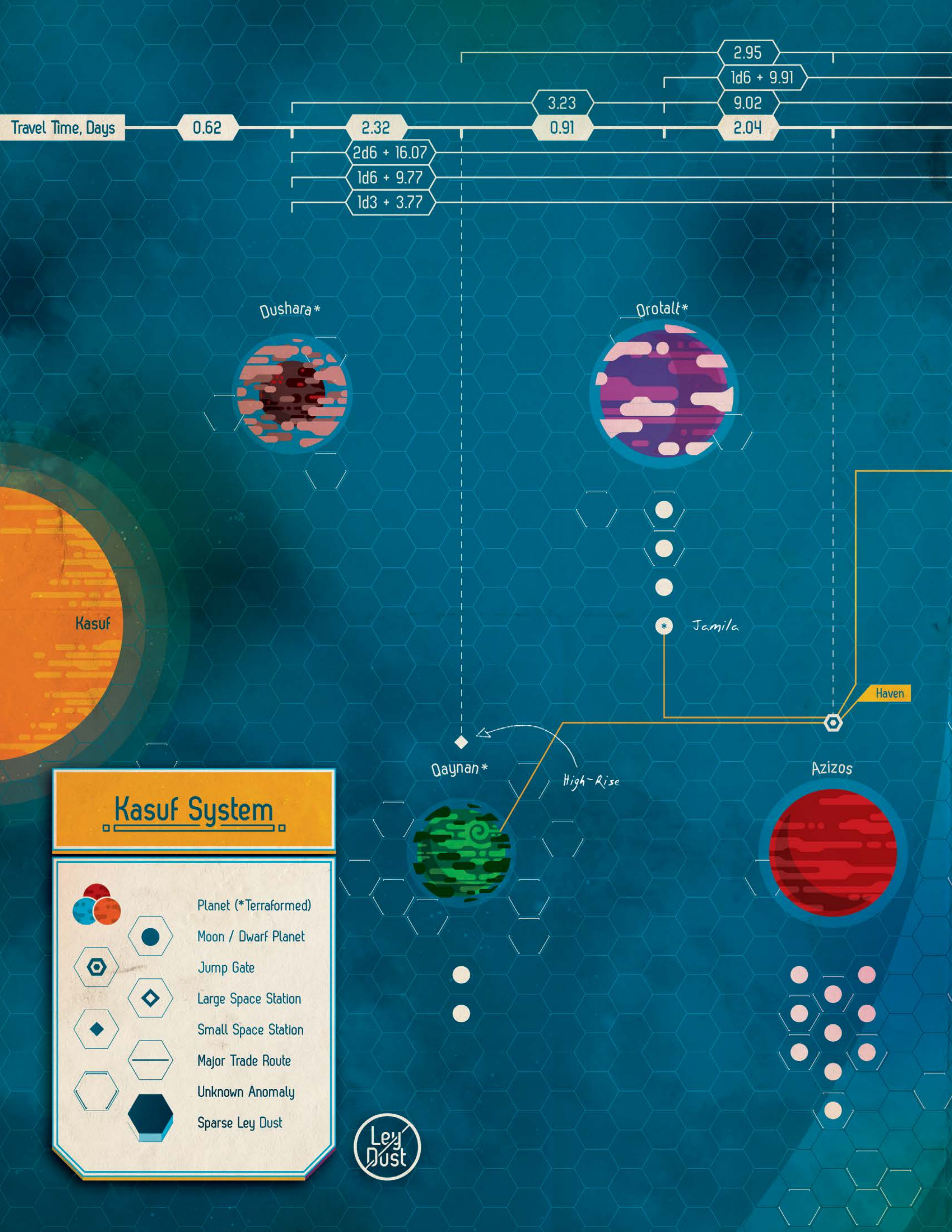
●	Planet (*Terraformed)
●	Moon / Dwarf Planet
⬡	Jump Gate
◇	Large Space Station
◆	Small Space Station
—	Major Trade Route
⬡	Unknown Anomaly
⬢	Nebula

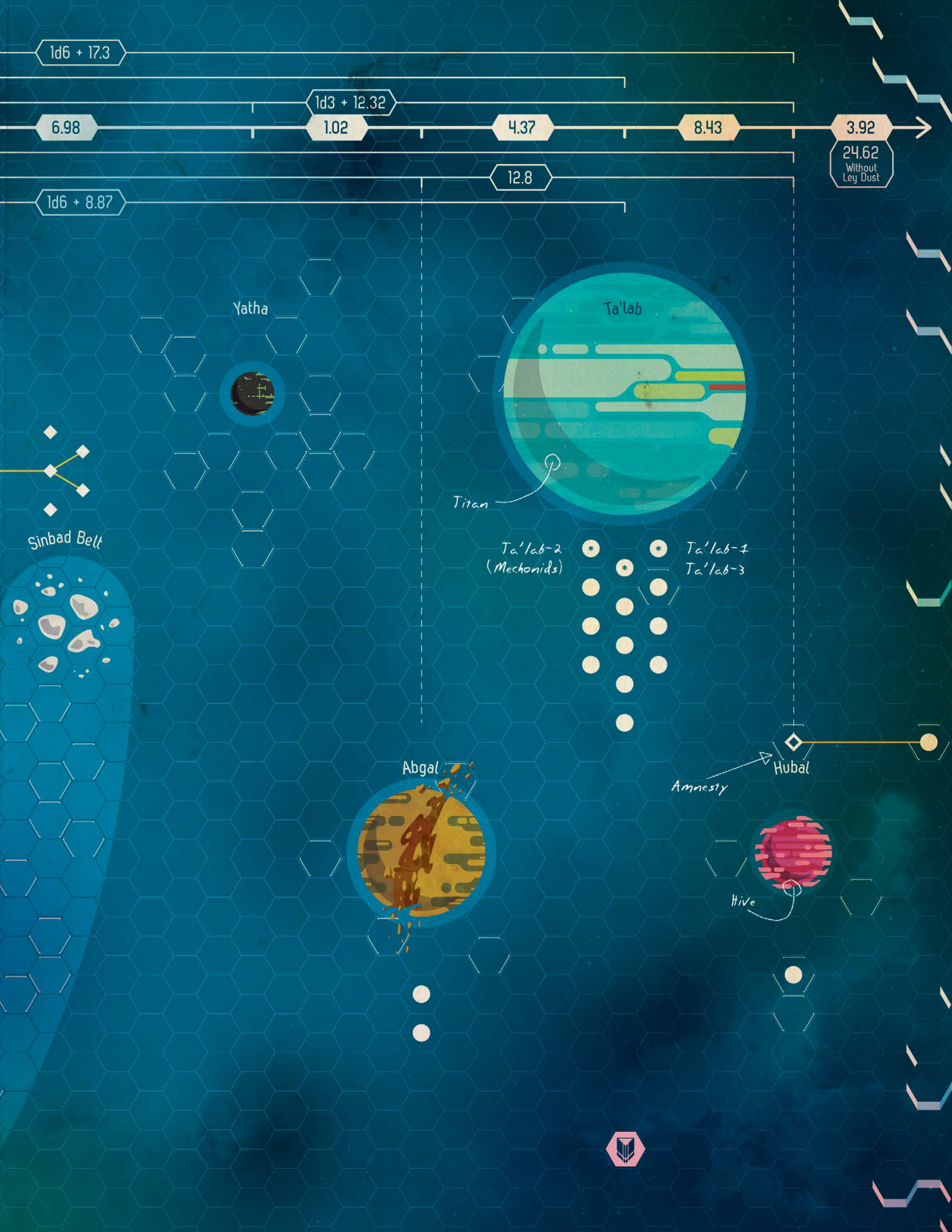
Pit Cities:
- Akkash (Cold)
- Carcho (Spiritual)
- New Eden (Dark)
- Selepp (Military)
- Uthar (Peaceful)
- Yasha (Large)
- Mayim (Mining)
- Ziz (Flooded)

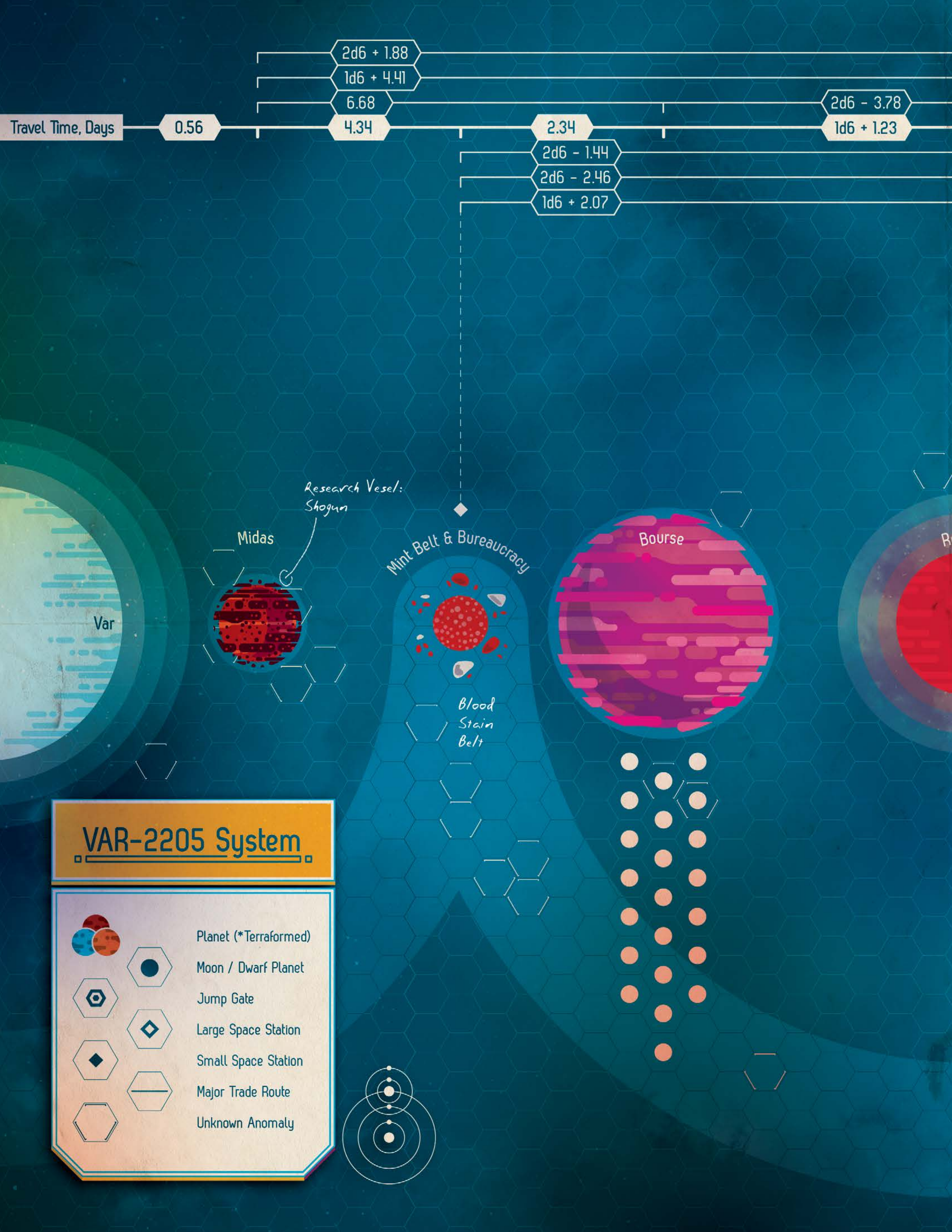
City:
- Necronus

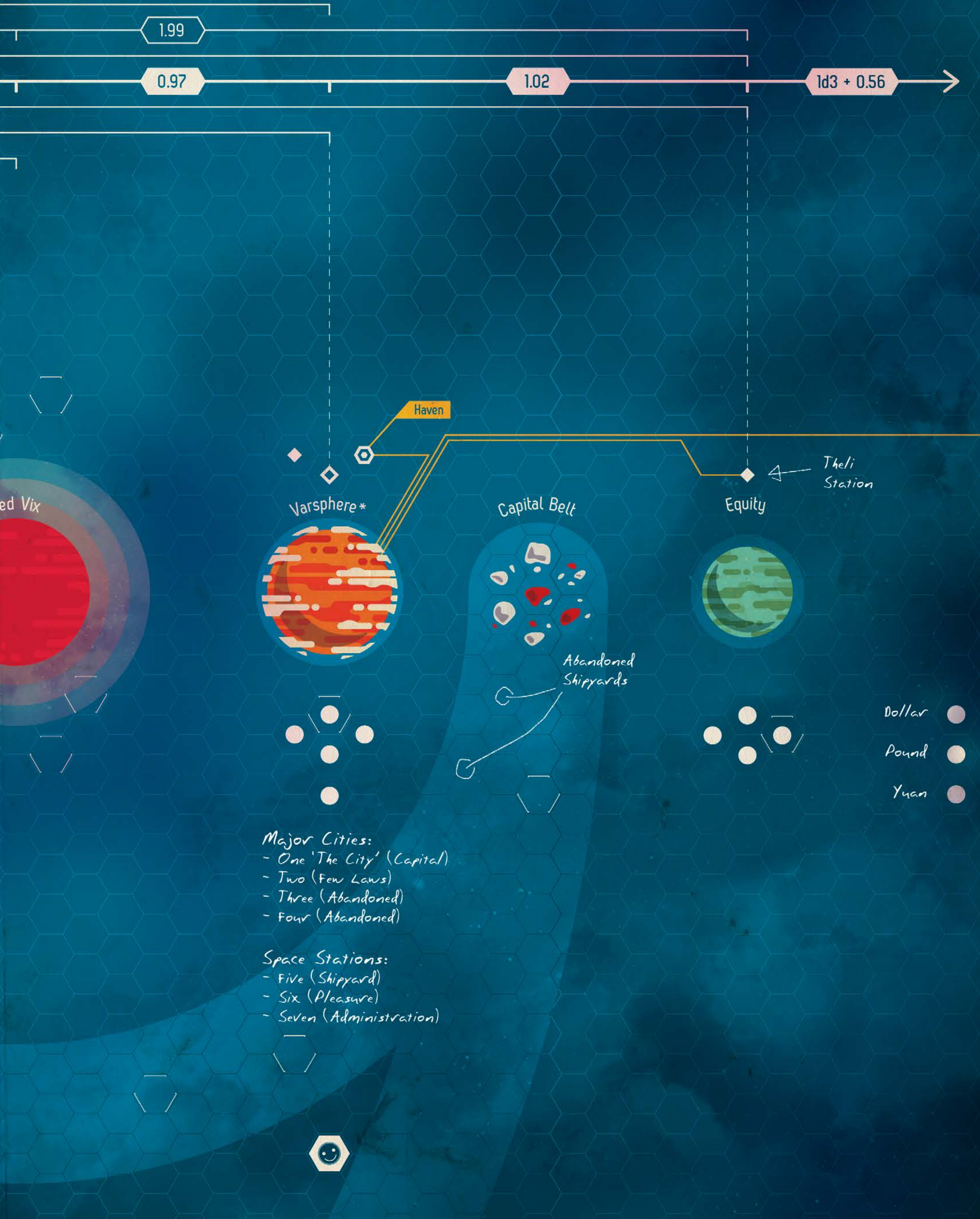
Major Cities:
- Beacon
- Gaj-Osh
- Mishpacha One->T
- Refuge


8.04
4.28
3.76
0.62
Halo Nebula
VAR-2205
Kasuf
Monopoly Belt
Alabaster
Liberty Belt
Lilith*
Warship: Olympus
Rugerero
Space Stations:
- One (Expensive)
- Two 'Glass' (Investment)
- Three (Chemical Attack)
- Four 'Stink' (Refinery)
- Five (Jump Gate)
- Six (Under Construction)
Sababa
L'chaim
Kibbutz
Oni World Ship
Three
Anah Station
Minos Station
+ Locke's Labyrinth


Travel Time, Days
0.62
2.32
3.23
0.91
2.95
1d6 + 9.91
9.02
2.04
2d6 + 16.07
1d6 + 9.77
1d3 + 3.77
Dushara*
Orotalt*
Kasuf
Jamila
Haven
Qaynan*
High-Rise
Azizos
Kasuf System
Planet (*Terraformed)
Moon / Dwarf Planet
Jump Gate
Large Space Station
Small Space Station
Major Trade Route
Unknown Anomaly
Sparse Ley Dust
Ley Dust

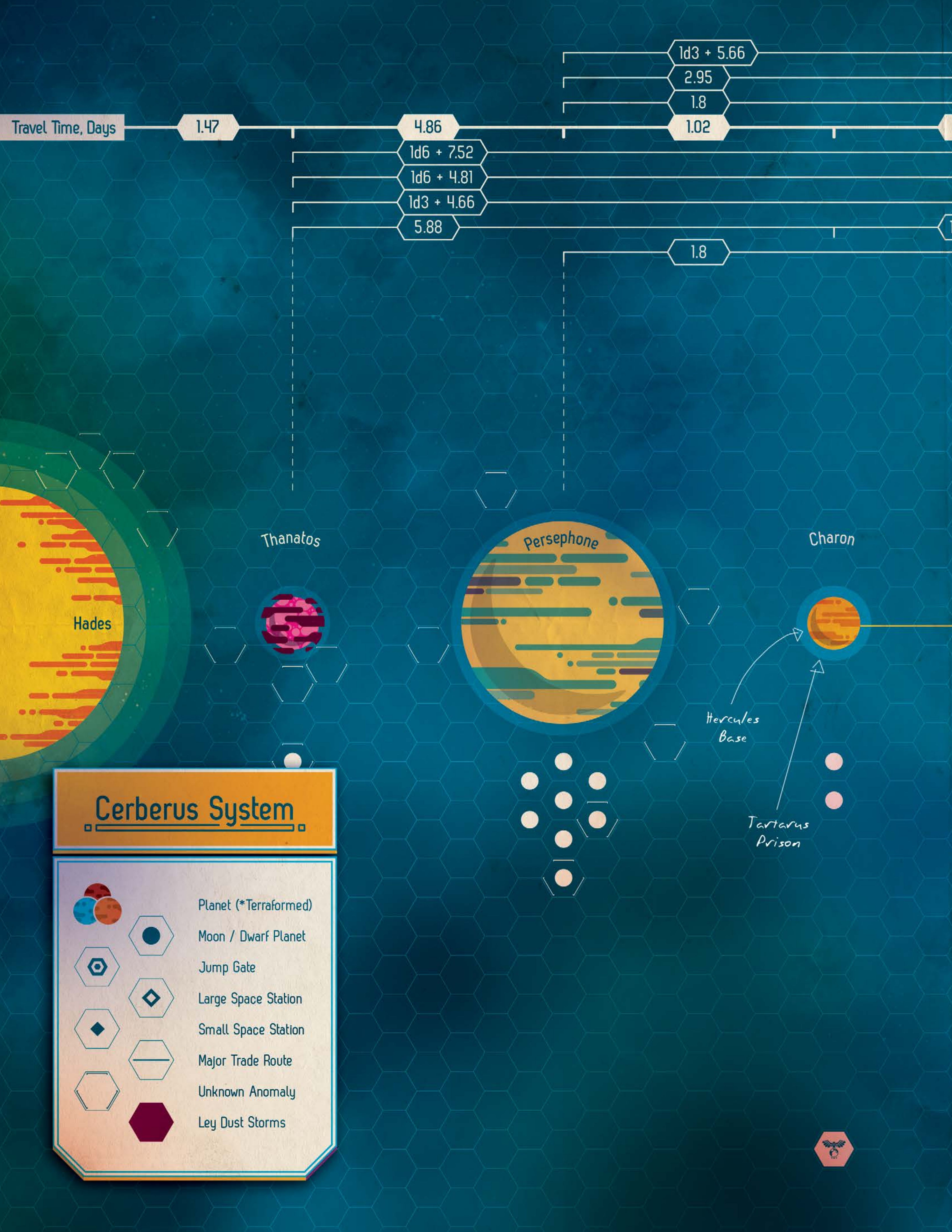

1d6 + 17.3
1d3 + 12.32
6.98
1.02
4.37
8.43
3.92
24.62 Without Ley Dust
12.8
1d6 + 8.87
Yatha
Ta'lab
Titan
Sinbad Belt
Ta'lab-2 (Mechonids)
Ta'lab-1
Ta'lab-3
Abgal
Hubal
Amnesty
Hive

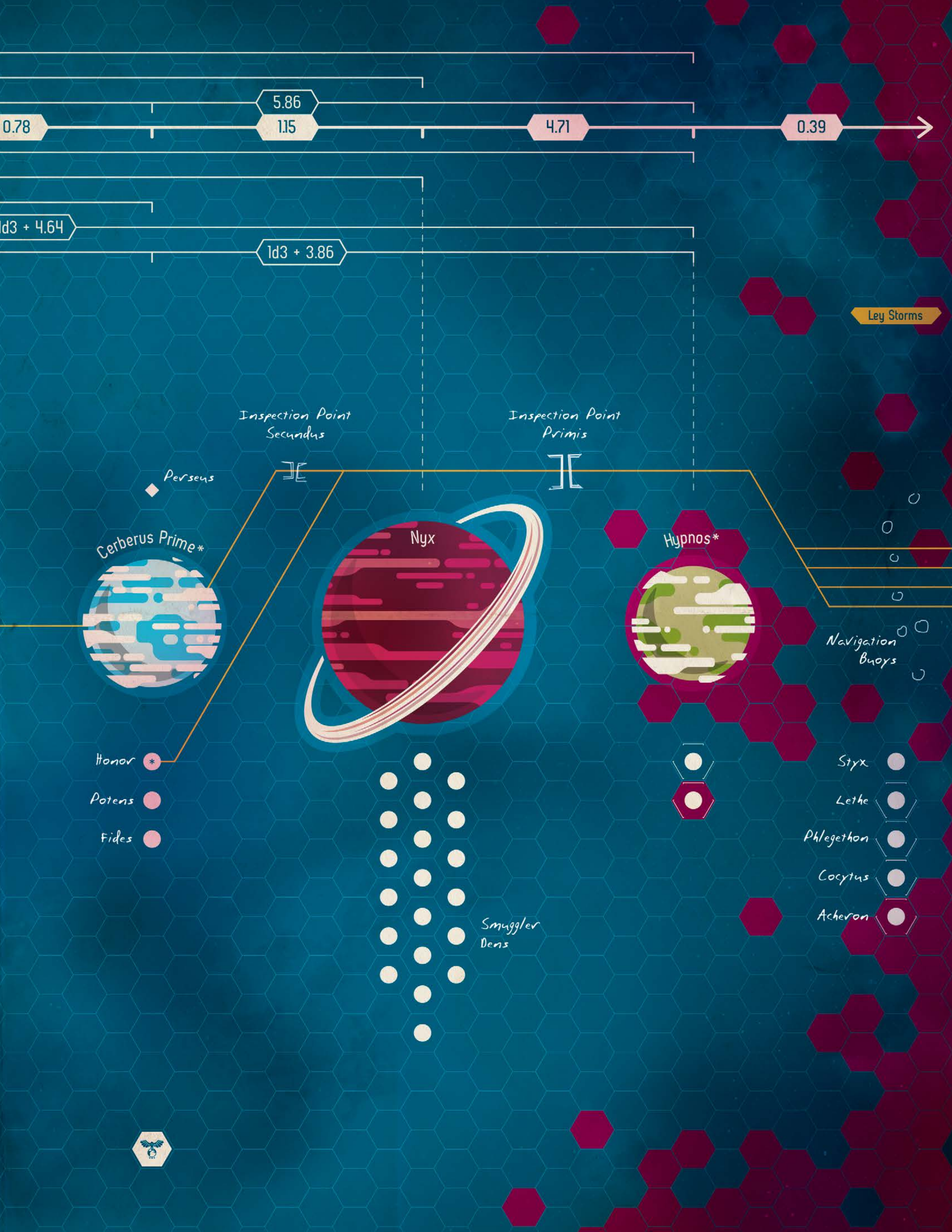

Travel Time, Days
0.56
2d6 + 1.88
1d6 + 4.41
6.68
4.34
2.34
2d6 - 1.44
2d6 - 2.46
1d6 + 2.07
2d6 - 3.78
1d6 + 1.23
Var
Midas
Research Vesel:
Shogun
Mint Belt & Bureaucracy
Blood
Stain
Belt
Bourse
VAR-2205 System
Planet (*Terraformed)
Moon / Dwarf Planet
Jump Gate
Large Space Station
Small Space Station
Major Trade Route
Unknown Anomaly


1.99
0.97
1.02
1d3 + 0.56
Haven
ed Vix
Varsphere *
Capital Belt
Equity
Theli Station
Abandoned Shipyards
Dollar
Pound
Yuan

Major Cities:
- One 'The City' (Capital)
- Two (Few Laws)
- Three (Abandoned)
- Four (Abandoned)

Space Stations:
- Five (Shipyard)
- Six (Pleasure)
- Seven (Administration)


Travel Time, Days
1.47
4.86
1d3 + 5.66
2.95
1.8
1.02
1d6 + 7.52
1d6 + 4.81
1d3 + 4.66
5.88
1.8
Hades
Thanatos
Persephone
Charon
Hercules Base
Tartarus Prison
Cerberus System
Planet (*Terraformed)
Moon / Dwarf Planet
Jump Gate
Large Space Station
Small Space Station
Major Trade Route
Unknown Anomaly
Ley Dust Storms


5.86
0.78
1.15
4.71
0.39
1d3 + 4.64
1d3 + 3.86
Ley Storms
Inspection Point Secundus
Inspection Point Primis
Perseus
Cerberus Prime*
Nyx
Hypnos*
Navigation Buoys
Honor *
Potens
Fides
Smuggler Dens
Styx
Lethe
Phlegethon
Cocytus
Acheron

CALVERA

Short Story:
The Calvera

Rachel stalked up the landing ramp, not even caring that she was walking into total darkness. This was her ship. Also, she was absolutely livid.

"Hey!" she yelled, crunching her boot against the metal grating, causing the rattling sound to echo throughout the hangar bay. "You think I'm scared?"

The Kaltoran mechanic took a moment to prime her arc-fire SMG. The weapon began to hum – a rising, richly satisfying tone of pulsing power – as it charged the bolts within the chamber. She hefted the weapon over her shoulder, knuckles white with the fury of her grip.

"You have sixty seconds!" she barked. "Any ghosts still haunting this ship when the time runs out? You're getting shot in the face."

Nothing stirred in the dimly lit hangar. Rachel slammed her fist onto the power switch, and the ship was suddenly ablaze with light.

It was time for some ghost hunting.

Six Hours Earlier

The first thing Rachel noticed was a searing, blinding white.

The second thing she noticed was the tube down her throat. In hindsight, that really felt like it should've been the first thing.

She sat up, using both hands to pull the pipe from her mouth, feeling like she wanted to cough up her insides all over the… where was she again? She blinked as her sight returned and the memories came flooding back, as they always did. The cryo-sleep chamber faded into view, with its clean white lighting and rows of pods embedded into the wall. Rachel sat up, massaging her throat, and saw Theo leaning against the wall next to the transparent steel window. It was about the only time she ever saw her captain dishevelled: hair spiking in random directions and yellow tattoo-like markings running down his lean back that were almost always hidden by a suit.

On the other side of the chamber, Max still sat in his pod, trying to rub some feeling back into his massive quads. The large simian Legion had none of his usual alertness; in fact, his skin seemed even greyer than usual, narrow eyes tired.

Damn, cryo-sleep was a pain in the backside. Brushing the long, thick braids of hair from her face, Rachel made to clamber out of the pod as the glass casing slid upwards, the bones in her legs feeling like they could turn to dust at the slightest touch.

"Morning!" trilled Texos, and Rachel yelped as the shock caused her to tumble to the floor. The bones held firm, although the pain in the backside was now very literal. Texos hovered next to her, a tray held in its spindly robot arms.

"Geist?" the small spherical drone chirped, in that cheery, clipped upper-class Alabaster accent that Theo refused to change. "Triple strength. Your preference."

The steam from the geist mug wafted gently upwards, making tantalizing promises of energy and mental sharpness. The Kaltoran was soon sipping the hot liquid, feeling it soothe both her spirit and her throat.

She fumbled with one foot, tapping the button on the tiny pet pod next to her own. It hissed as the glass lid slid open, and the pudgy, furry green form of her Memling companion slowly unfurled itself, stretching its whole body after its lengthy nap.

Theo accepted a mug of geist when it was offered, but didn't drink. "Report," he croaked.

"Excellent time," Texos said. "Forty three standard days travel, five hours to destination. Several messages from creditors. Average tone: irate."

Theo grunted and massaged the bridge of his nose. Grabbing her dressing gown, Rachel left him to his financial woes and made her way on shaky legs out of the room, the Memling curling around her ankles as she went. Already, she was feeling a keen urge to give the ship a full diagnostic. There was a tiny, quadrillion-in-one chance that they'd ploughed through a crystalized ley storm in the past month, or something even worse. She wasn't about to let the crew be stranded this far outside the Haven system.

Hraks stood in the corridor narrow, tapping on an auxiliary console. The olive-skinned Nephilim woman wore her dark brown travelling gear, trench coat and all. Her black head tendrils were loosely bound, falling down over her shoulders.

"How long have you been up...?" Rachel whispered, her voice still hoarse as she took another sip from the mug of life.

"Six cycles," Hraks said, without looking up.

"All by yourself?"

A final keystroke, and the lights of the corridor switched from sleep mode to full power. Rachel found herself blinking again.

"I had work to do in the lab," Hraks replied. "Our trip to Mishpacha alone left me with enough live samples for a month's work. They're not going to dissect themselves."

"After all that time sitting in jars, watching you slice up their friends, they just might try."

"That would be an interesting observation..." she said, actually seeming pleased at the prospect. In her more morbid moments, Rachel wondered what would happen if she were to die on a mission; specifically, how long it would be before Hraks would be dissecting her. She'd had a dream of something similar, just as she'd been entering cryo-sleep. That was when her genetic memories flared up strongest, some of them stretching back to the Great War, and her ancestors who managed to escape the Nephilim orbital bombardments and harvesting camps.

'Camps' was perhaps the wrong word. 'Pop-up laboratories' was closer to the truth.

Rachel gave a quick jerk of her head, as if physically loosening the memory's grip on her mind and flinging it off. Hraks didn't seem to notice. At that moment, her stomach loudly and angrily demanded food.

It was definitely time for breakfast.

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The galley lighting dimmed as Theo tapped buttons on his scroll, bringing up an expanding set of holograms. The crew of the Galatèa was arranged in a circle around the dining table, Rachel tucking into a plate of xytgel eggs with the gusto of a person who hadn't eaten in a month. 'Cryo-cravings', the Kaltorans called it.

> "Yes, the Nephilim won the Great X'ion War a century back. Their monstrous warriors swept across our unprepared, infiltrated and fractured Archon empire like a plague, and their diabolic scientists demonstrated how ruthless cunning is more effective than superior resources." Leonora Stargaze looked down from the bridge of her Twi-Far ship at the desolate world of Eden with some apprehension. "But they themselves were never meant to be more than a weapon. They were nothing but a tool for their X'ion creator to enact its wrath upon the Archons before abandoning them itself.
>
> The ship's large solar sails retracted as the vessel moved into the upper atmosphere in preparation for shuttle deployment. Technical directions between crewmates filled the bridge as Captain Stargaze fixed her eyes upon their destination as she talked with her quartermaster.
>
> "We have spent our lives among the stars fighting X'ion's children. But these Eden Brood Nephilim are not like our Oni Nephilim foes... they, like us, have rejected our cruel creators who sought to exploit, use and abuse us." Captain Stargaze turned to look at her companion. "Do your best to reign in your prejudices and discomfort. We may be at peace with this brood, but they are an aggressive people with monstrous appearances. Keep your calm, talk with strength, and do be sure to get those power cells that we need."

Max sat by her side, half clad in his trusty, faded red armour. Theo's hair was now neat, dark green suit and coat crisp and perfectly tailored. Rachel hadn't even bothered to change out of her dressing gown.

"We're close," Theo said, flicking his finger and summoning a final hologram: the image of a boxy Corporate freighter. "Where's V'Kriish?"

As if in response, the door slid open and the Nephilim Tenebrous entered. Where Hraks was slender, four-limbed and had perfectly sculpted features that had been crafted in a lab for maximum appeal, V'Kriish was what Rachel would have called 'a Nephilim classic'. Not that their species had any single form, but her genetic memories of the Great War included several of his kind: suspended on a set of six dark purple tentacles, a giant face and two small arms stuck onto a splodgy, bulbous body, and even more teeth than would fit in his mouth.

Despite her best efforts, a tiny shudder ran down her spine. The sight of V'Kriish just held far too many memories. Though he kept the motion subtle, Max's grip tightened on his mug as the Nephilim draped himself over a chair next to him. Rachel knew V'Kriish had noticed, but he chose not to show it.

"My apologies," he said, in that raspy voice that nonetheless sounded far too crisp and clipped for a being of his shape. "My method of slumbering needs no pod, and yet… rousing oneself is not swift."

"If the job goes well, we'll have one of ours retrofitted for your shape," Theo said. "Speaking of which…"

He enlarged the hologram of the ship, so that it expanded to fill the space above the table.

"The Calvera. Corp freighter. Went missing two months ago, with no contact from the crew. It was finally detected by long-range probes orbiting a toxic moon in the system CAL-34xxP."

"Cargo?" Hraks asked.

Theo brought up an inventory list. "Non-organic materials, mostly. Some rare minerals, fuel, medicine… they were scavenging an ancient mining facility that got hit pretty badly during the war."

"Hostiles?" Max grunted.

"Scans don't show any damage…" Rachel muttered through a mouthful of food, peering at the floating readings. She used the end of her fork to scroll through the list of reports. "Looks like they were doing fine, and then just… stopped."

"Well, first and foremost, Mr Lampwick is paying us for answers," Theo finished, shutting off the display. "We get this done, we're looking at a large payday. More, if we can load up some of the lost cargo."

"Or… rescue some of the crew?" Rachel ventured.

"Possibly. No bonuses listed in that area, however."

Theo leaned back in his chair, pointedly ignoring Rachel's glare. There was a loud slurping sound from the opposite side of the table. V'Kriish had a clear packet of a sickly yellow liquid grasped in one of his tentacles. An additional appendage had emerged from his mouth, piercing the package and drinking in the contents.

With the briefing over, the Tenebrous untangled himself from the chair and slithered out of the room. Once the slurping sound had faded, Max's shoulders released their tension.

"Do we still think it wise to take on a new crewmember?" the Legion grunted. "We were fine by ourselves."

"V'Kriish is the finest navigator we could acquire," Hraks pointed out. "Or is your problem with his… appearance?"

She raised a mug to her lips, deliberately making her expression unreadable.

Max met her gaze. "I didn't mean it like that."

For a moment, Hraks didn't answer, staring into the heart of her cup. "I would appreciate you giving him a chance. After all, I believe I've proven that not all Nephilim are hellbent on waiting until you're asleep and drinking your bodily fluids."

For Hraks, this was about as close as it got to humour. Max grunted, but at the same time, he raised his palms in a brief gesture of peace.

"Hraks, stop antagonising him," Theo chided in a bored tone, not even looking up from his stock reports. "You know it really tears me up when you don't get along."

Rachel snorted into her eggs, while the corners of Hraks' mouth twitched. Max gave an amicable sigh as he stood, rotating his shoulders and cracking his neck. He ducked underneath the door, heading for the armoury, while Hraks – having finished her geist – handed the mug to Texos before heading to the lab.

Pushing her plate away, Rachel scooped up the Memling in her arms, where it caught sight of the scraps on her plate and immediately began squirming to reach them.

"It's just you and me, pal," she said, totally sincere as she looked into its eyes. "We're the morale officers. Let's do our best and help everyone get along, like buddies. 'Kay?"

The Memling responded by squirming out of her arms, flopping onto the table and gleefully polishing off the remains of her breakfast. Rachel resolved to work on her recruitment tactics some other time. The Calvera was waiting.

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The hangar of the Calvera was vast, empty, and strangely warm. Rachel took a few steps down the landing ramp of the Galatèa, almost feeling like she was back in the jungles of Mishpacha as the heat hit her. The metal surfaces were lit only by yellow strips of emergency lighting along the floor and walls.

"It's warm," Rachel helpfully noted, pulling up the sleeves of her jacket as Max descended the ramp next to her. "Like, warmer than usual."

Although his chest was armoured, Max's arms were bare. He wore his rifle slung over his back, a heavy pistol strapped to his right thigh, a couple of large knives stowed in his boots and an entire belt of grenades.

The Legion gave a short chuckle. "If you're craving the cold, we could visit my home on Cerberus Prime."

"Let's not get crazy," Rachel retorted. "You grew up on a ball of ice. I grew up in cosy caves. This temperature is just fine, thanks." She unzipped her thick jacket. "One day, though... I would like to meet your family."

Max grimaced. "That's a scary thought."

She gave him a playful punch on the arm, albeit one with most of her strength. It still bounced off the wall of muscle. Theo walked through the middle of them, making a motion with his hand that was quickly followed by Texos buzzing over their heads, rotating as it scanned the space.

"At least we've got life support," Theo announced. He pulled up the collar of his coat. "I wouldn't expect heat to be running on auto, though. Readings?"

Hraks strode down the ramp, eyes moving back and forth as the readings were transmitted to her palm scanner. "Looks like the freighter has shifted to emergency power. But..." She frowned as she used a finger to further scroll through the data. "... automated systems are diverting massive amounts of power to the cargo bay, on the other side of the ship."

"Automated?" Rachel asked.

"With no command crew, the Calvera has shifted to autonomous operation," Hraks explained. "A crude system, but it makes basic decisions on how best to preserve the life of its inhabitants and the integrity of the ship."

Theo nodded, turning to face the team. "Then that's our destination. Two routes: Max and I, Hraks and V'Kriish. Meet at the cargo bay."

Rachel flinched as V'Kriish slithered past her. She hadn't even noticed he'd left the ship.

"Perhaps we'll make a short sojourn via the bridge?" the Nephilim suggested. "We can try to activate some of the dormant systems and acquire answers."

"Alright, do it," Theo confirmed. "Rachel, you're with the ship. I don't want any stray crewmembers seeing the Galatèa as their ticket out of here."

"Oh no," Rachel said, in a monotone, already walking backwards up the ramp. "Such injustice. Me, doing maintenance in here. You, skulking around the creepy sauna ship. You fiend."

"Swap?" Max asked, totally deadpan. The Kaltoran had already pulled the ramp lever, giving a cheery salute as it ascended, sealing off the hangar bay with a clang. Her Memling scampered up to her to be scooped into her arms.

"We got lucky, buddy," she said, holding the creature up so that they were eye to eye. "But we've still got work to do. Old Galatèa ain't gonna maintain herself."

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It was the same scene in every room: half-eaten meals, chairs pulled out, personal scrolls and devices lying abandoned. Every time Theo and Max passed through a workstation, or peered into a room, the results were the same. The steady hum of the emergency systems and the sparse floor lighting lent the ship's deserted hallways an eerie, dreamlike quality. Theo was far too practical for 'dreamlike'. It grated on his nerves.

"I'd prefer corpses," the Legion soldier muttered, nudging a chair at a workstation that weakly spun in a circle. "Least then we'd know what we're dealing with."

Theo switched on a monitor, revealing the most recent screen: a request for maintenance down on the habitation deck. Mundane, ordinary... and the final words trailed off midsentence. "No sign of an evacuation order. Teleportation, maybe?"

"Only Mechonids have that sort of tech," Max confirmed. "No sign of those robotic bastards. This has 'Neph' written all over it."

For a moment, Theo pretended to be interested in the scrolling reports. Inventory, supplies, workplace disputes: nothing but dull chatter. Finally, he straightened, tilting his head towards Max.

"Tell me honestly," he said. "Do you have a problem with V'Kriish?"

Max hesitated. "It's... he's fine."

As he did when negotiating, Theo left a short pause; long enough to choose his next words carefully, while giving his conversation partner time to do the same. "He came recommended. And he has over a century of experience; more than all of us put together. But..."

"It's not him," Max growled, now sounding defensive. The words hung in the air for a moment before the Legion soldier looked away, using the hand that wasn't holding his huge rifle to set an empty chair spinning. "It's just... I spent years of military training firing at targets made to look just like him. All the other Neph types as well. And you can't avoid the war stories. The things they did…"

Theo nodded. "Boot camp back on Cerberus Prime can't be the most… forgiving of programmes."

Max already looking embarrassed to have said so much, his gaze set firmly on the floor. Theo decided not to press the issue. Some things were better left to sink in over time.

"I know people think that all of the various species of Haven need to work together. This is simple from a pure economic and 'stop another war' point of view, which one must admit are valid considerations." Katashi_024 gently moved his metal fingers, getting a feel for the new neural net that had been placed throughout his robotic body by a Corp the day before for an exorbitant amount of credits.

"The Corp have the economic and logistical systems, along with some tech and raw resources. The Kaltorans have ore and food. Legion have guns. Nephilim have the organic tech and some muscle… when they decide to use it. Twi-Far have star maps, and the Remnant have… god?" Katashi turned to look at his friend through the ship's holographic display. "But bringing unity doesn't just bring the good, it also brings in people's problems."

"And are we one of those?" Bia_062 spoke with a reflective tone, as she had long pondered this question.

"Yes, but we are not alone in this sin. The Remnant bring the ghostly Echoes. The Twi-Far the monstrous Oni and Zhou. The Kaltorans bring piracy and cannibals. The Corp bring greed and tyranny, and the Legion make true peace with the Eden Brood Nephilim impossible. And a hard truth for us is that if we Palantor are to survive we need to use them to defeat the Mechonids no matter how much it costs them."

"But it was the damn Corp who awoke them, shouldn't they bear some responsibility?" Bia's tone was harsh, their war with the Mechonids had cost her many friends and she found it impossible to speak of them without anger and a growing sense of frustration.

"It doesn't matter who is to blame, what matters is survival." Katashi turned to look at his hand again, one of his support servo motors was running slow.

"But won't that turn us into monsters?"

"Maybe. But just as the other species did whatever it took to survive their Years of Darkness, so too must we."

This was, he mused, what Corporates liked so much about currency; himself included, of course. No need for singing around a campfire to heal old wounds, when you could just judge by numbers in a bank account. It was a beautiful, efficient and utterly cold system of supply and demand, one that had no place for petty prejudice. In his rare philosophical moments, Theo wondered why the other species couldn't understand things the Corp way.

They left the screen still blinking, the request never to be finished. Texos used its arc-fire cutting torch to sear through a nearby security lock, and they pried open the door to the maintenance stairwell. Their cautiously placed footsteps mingled with the low hum of the emergency systems as they descended.

"Here," Theo said, two levels down. "This is our floor."

Texos used the same technique to cut through another door, then buzzed aside as Max planted a massive boot onto the flat surface. It collapsed with a resounding clang, and they emerged at the end of a wide corridor that led to a large blast door, much taller than either of them and several metres wide. 'CARGO BAY' was printed on the outside in thick Corp script.

Even in the weak lighting, they could see something glistening on the floor as they approached. A sickly-sweet odour hit them like a wave as they drew near, and they were forced to stop a few paces from the door. Leaking underneath was a thick ooze, sickly green and lightly steaming.

"Told you," Max grunted. Theo didn't even bother answering.

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The Calvera's systems had obviously been protected by someone as pedantic about cyber security as Hraks. She and V'Kriish stood at the end of the suspended walkway, the circular bridge all around them and quiet as death. A few feet behind her, the older Nephilim tapped away at a console of his own.

For a few blissful moments, there was simply the sound of keystrokes.

"I don't think they like me very much," V'Kriish said in a casual tone, before unnecessarily adding: "The Legion and Kaltoran, I mean."

Hraks had a brief moment of confusion as she tried to ascertain why this was his chosen topic. She didn't look away from her screen. "Is your concern for efficiency?"

"Child, I've slithered among the species of Haven since their re-emergence back into the stars. At some point – or in my case, from the very beginning – the distrust becomes wearing."

'And how would you have me respond?' Hraks left the thought unspoken, but the elder Nephilim kept on speaking as if he'd read her mind.

"I suppose it initially warmed my cardiovascular system to find such a cosmopolitan bunch as yourselves," he mused. "But then, the way they look at me… well, it makes an old fellow feel rather excluded."

"Hmm." Was this humour? Did he expect her to react?

Her attempts to activate the mainframe were met with repeated failure. On V'Kriish's side, the tapping of keys had stopped, and his voice was no longer turned away from her.

"It's just…" V'Kriish said, "… perhaps I overestimated the ability of an Emissary such as yourself to, ah… 'ingratiate' the Nephilim with the other species. Did I craft you to be too much like them, perhaps?"

Hraks stared resolutely at the blinking red error message. Her palm device sat just below the console, scrolling through thousands of different code combinations every second.

"I suppose…" she began, speaking with a guarded slowness, "From a psychological perspective, prejudice is difficult to dislodge."

V'Kriish chuckled, a disgusting sound like he was disgorging a bone. She wondered if it was real humour, or if he was able to simulate the emotion.

"Oh, quite. It's why myself and a few of my forward-thinking peers created your strain in the first place: a hope that the Nephilim could reshape their place in Haven and beyond."

"We often mistakenly think that electronics were Humanity's crowning achievement. But it was not." Gratar closed his large ageing Nephilim eyes in thought. "It was their grasp over gravity… or possibly that they had pushed the scientific fields of energy so far that they had started to cross over into seemingly disconnected parallel fields."

Gratar's wrinkled hands swept across the holographic board in large arcing sweeps, pushing complex equations and diagrams of robots to the edge or off into the digital bin. All to be replaced by a deceptively simple formula.

V = Sqrt(GM/R)

"Their titanic terraforming robots are still at work today. We can start to understand how they are changing atmospheres, creating flora and fauna. Even for planets that are far outside the ideal habitable zone of their sun… but not how they alter gravity. That might as well be magic to us." Gratar took a seat, his back to the room of Corp students. Bradford Investment was paying him a fortune for these lectures, but he knew they were wasting their money. There was no way those titans were ever going to let anybody near them.

V'Kriish had now drifted to her side, and she could see him out of the corner of her eye. Hraks now knew how it felt when she peered at her live specimens through the walls of their glass prisons.

"Many Emissaries disappoint me by seeking tight single-species communes. But you, my dear? You may be proof that Nephilim can grow beyond our past. Transcend our boundaries, as it were. It's an exciting prospect, no?"

"With the utmost respect that is due to one of my designers," the Nephilim Emissary said, finally looking over in his direction and trying to keep her voice level, "Is it not this fascination with sociology that has led to your discrediting amongst the Eden scientific elite?"

"Child, there comes a time when one grows tired of sticking together different body parts. Science is far more enigmatic than the Eden Genocrats would have us believe."

As far as Hraks was concerned, if V'Kriish's waxing lyrical about enigmas wasn't already walking a fine line, questioning the Genocrats was a sign of deep foolishness. It was bad enough that an infamously eccentric founding father of the Emissary Project had inserted himself onto the crew, making her feel under intense scrutiny every moment of the day. Now, he was spouting nonsense that could make both of them pariahs.

He sighed, drifting back to his console. A few minutes later, Hraks switched off her screen in frustration.

"The system is well defended," she said, turning to her companion. "Anything from your end?"

For a moment, she thought she saw a glimmer of security footage displayed on V'Kriish's monitor. Then the screen turned black, and he turned with a brief shrug. "Very little. I did get the horizontal elevator working, however."

They rode the elevator through the ship, thankfully in total silence. Hraks strode out immediately once they reached the cargo bay, eager to escape both the small space and any further attempts at conversation. First, she registered Theo and Max standing at the end of the corridor, which meant they were in the right place.

Then, the smell hit her: the sickly, absolutely unmistakeable scent of a thousand different chemicals. It was a smell Hraks could never forget.

"That's…" she began, but V'Kriish cut her off as he slithered to her side.

"Birthing fluid," he said. "Nephilim, birthing fluid."

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Rachel danced, because there was no one there to see her. Or at least, the Memling wouldn't be telling anyone.

The sounds of Kadash electro-synth echoed throughout the engine room, far louder than she ever would've dared, had she not been the only one on board. In between welding, tightening, reprogramming crucial systems and no small amount of percussive maintenance, she would swing her arms in wide arcs, her dreadlocks swaying in time with the music. These were classics, already dated when her great grandparents were lovestruck teens, sneaking away from their mining posts for romantic trysts in amongst dusty, forgotten machinery.

But Rachel didn't care. The melodies stirred her genetic memories, awakening old sensations and feelings. Some were her own memories with her adopted family. Others were those of her dark tribe parents and grandparents, or even further back to Kadash's first refugees. Music had a way of bringing positive recollections to the forefront of her mind, all of them sharing the core elements that bound Kaltorans together: the celebration of family. Dinners, festivals, weddings, or simply impromptu gatherings where they would dance, sing, laugh, and experience life as a community.

That was a frenzied dance all by itself.

Rachel gave a sharp kick to the auxiliary gravity generator, seamlessly sweeping her leg back into an elegant motion that gave way to a move that had her running in place, head swinging in time to the beat. The generator hummed, but she made a mental note to check it again once they were ready to take off. Like the rest of the ship, it was cobbled together with cheap, second-hand parts, and especially vulnerable to quick power surges.

Bane of my existence.

And yet, as Rachel glanced around at the dusty engine room, she knew she'd never have it any other way. The Galatèa was a pile of junk, but it was her pile of junk.

The chorus began again. Rachel swept her Memling companion up in her arms, gently lifting it to head height and swaying, as if they were dancing in an elegant Alabaster ballroom. It squeaked, half-heartedly trying to squirm free.

"Everyone's a critic," she muttered, placing the creature back onto the engine room floor. "I'll have you know, this is a classic."

For a moment, the creature simply tilted its head, looking up at her with its usual mild bemusement. Then it bristled, letting out a low hiss. Rachel hesitated; this was new. Frowning, she followed the creature's gaze, scanning the high walls of the engine room. Nothing stood out, until her keen eyes caught sight of a shadow in one of the corners, nearest to the elevator shaft. What she at first thought to be a shadow was moving, shimmering in the dim engine room lighting.

The Memling scampered onto her shoulder, still bristling and trembling in fear. Swallowing, Rachel tapped the pause button, killing the music as she fumbled behind her back for a shock wrench.

More shapes began to appear. Her heart lurched in her chest. Something was perched in the corner… and lower down, another shape. On the opposite wall, yet another. The ghosts never took solid form, but she could gather more details as her finely tuned Kaltoran senses focused on them: bullet-shaped bodies with spindly, insectoid legs, scuttling along the walls like spiders. They were coming from all directions, slowly closing the distance.

The first few made it to the floor and began to crawl towards her; or at least, the clacking of claws grew steadily closer. Her grip tightened on the shock wrench as her eyes flicked to the single-platform elevator, then to the opening that led to the main corridor, far above them. Even more creatures now gathered between her and the exit, their true numbers impossible to determine as they slowly moved towards her.

Her throat was dry as she weighed her options, most of them terrible. The shoddy lights flickered.

The shoddy lights.

Everything in this room was cheap and cobbled together. It was built from nothing but leftovers.

But they were leftovers Rachel knew better than her own name.

The first few creatures were just a couple of metres away, getting ready to strike. The mechanic fumbled for the dials behind her back, jerking them all up to maximum. The auxiliary gravity generator whined as it shifted to its highest settings, far more than it could handle. Rachel's other hand was hovering over the manual switch. One press, and the auto system that detected when they were in zero gravity would be overridden.

Rachel slammed her hand onto the button, and the generator practically howled with the strain. With everything jacked up to maximum, the machine sent out one single, massive gravity pulse before its insides burst into flames. A split-second before, Rachel pushed into the air with all of her strength.

The pulse rippled out from the generator, blasting the entire room with a chaotic wave of zero gravity for just a few moments. Rachel's momentum sent her and the Memling soaring, while the unprepared creatures were sent careening all around the engine room, their shapes becoming briefly visible. Rachel swung the shock wrench as she flew, and it crackled every time she batted one of the flailing creatures out of the way. She braced herself as she slammed into the wall of the elevator, shoulder first. It hurt, but she had just enough time to hook her fingers onto the floor of the corridor above before the gravity returned to normal, and suddenly her body had weight again.

There was a chorus of wet clangs as the creatures all dropped to the floor, but she could hear them scuttling again: they'd be coming after her, faster than before.

She pulled herself up, planting her feet and taking off at a sprint towards the cargo bay, Memling still clinging to her shoulders.

There were stragglers here, crawling along the walls, fading into full visibility as they snapped at her with vicious jaws. One tore through her leather trousers, another had to be struck out of the way with another swing of the shock wrench.

She sprinted through the ship, not stopping to look behind her. Hitting the ramp door controls multiple times, she launched herself off the still-descending edge and into the Calvera's hangar. Landing in a crouch, she whirled round. The spectral, shimmering shapes seemed to gather at the threshold of the ship, a writhing mass of limbs. They went no further.

Utterly furious, blood pumping in her ears, Rachel backed off until she was forced to turn her back on the ship, heading deeper into the freighter and leaving the Galatèa to the ghosts.

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For a moment, no one seemed to have anything to say about the murky fluid leaking out from underneath the cargo bay door. Max tried his hardest not to cast any pointed glances over at either of the two Nephilim.

"Well," Theo said flatly. "That's probably not normal."

"It's only birthing fluid," V'Kriish replied, slithering into the shallow pool and placing a tentacle over the door switch. "Nothing harmful. Unless you were planning on drinking it."

He turned to the group, giving them what might have been a smile before pressing the button. Already holding his Apollo gauss rifle in both hands, Max took a step back along with the others as another shallow wave of fluid came gushing out of the sliding metal door. A wave of heat hit them like a physical blow, and for a moment Max struggled to breathe as the hot air filled his lungs. Waving away the sudden burst of foul air, they saw that they were staring into pitch blackness. The emergency floor lighting ended where they were standing, and the overhead lights began to blaze to life, starting closest to them and weakly blinking to life in a row along the entire length of the room.

The cargo in the bay itself was almost completely obscured. Massive, organic sacks of fluid coated the walls, latched onto every surface by sickly red webbing. They dripped a softly glowing ooze in a thousand different colours, pooling onto the metal floor in a slick, wet coating. Inside the sacks were dark shapes, some of them gently pulsing with movement.

"I think..." Theo breathed, reaching for his gun, "... I might have an idea about what happened to the crew."

"Indeed," V'Kriish wheezed, laying a tentacle on Theo's wrist. "But not in the way you would think."

He sidled over the threshold, approaching the nearest pod. Using the tip of a tendril to stroke his chin, the old Tenebrous leaned in close to inspect the sack of fluid. Theo and Hraks cautiously followed, while Max stood torn with indecision.

He was getting some strong urges to open fire on the entire room. But plenty of Legion had given in to their base combat urges when dealing with Nephilim creations in the past. There was always a surprise; some trick to snare an unsuspecting enemy. Feeling his disgust grow, Max stepped into the arid cargo bay, tensed for any movement.

"These are hibernation pods," Hraks said, passing her palm scanner over one of them. "But... why is the Calvera hosting an entire brood nest?"

"You know the truth, child," V'Kriish said, sounding weary. He looked up from his inspection. "I implanted these lessons myself. The Trojanix Seed."

Theo was over in the corner, nudging the remains of several hatched pods with his foot. He turned, expression cold. "You seem to know an awful lot about this, V'Kriish. Anything you'd like to share?"

V'Kriish was still. Max hated how little he was able to read the Tenebrous, either in face or body language. Finally, the old Nephilim let out a rasping sigh.

"I wasn't part of the Trojanix project," he explained. "But I observed several deployments during the siege of Eden."

"Genetically engineered spores," Hraks continued. Her face was even paler than usual. "Perhaps the Calvera accidentally brought some on board with their cargo. They rapidly develop into fungal growths, before... detonating, in a sense."

"So they exploded," Theo surmised. "In transit, no less. Then what?"

"The mature spores will have flooded the ship," V'Kriish finished. Max thought he detected a strange hint of regret in his tone. "Once they were breathed in, it was already too late. Paralysis, seizures, the rewriting of primary instincts; the seed would trigger a rather swift, inelegant mutation, and afterwards... rebirth."

Rebirth. The pieces fell into place: the empty ship, daily life mysteriously cut off.

The creatures in this nest didn't do this to the crew. They were the crew.

"If the reports are correct, then Trojanix Seeds were only used a handful of times," Hraks said. She hesitated, glancing at V'Kriish as if waiting for correction. "No one working on the project ever managed to curb their volatility, or their resource cost."

"Quite, child," the elderly scientist confirmed. He gently caressed the outside of one of the pods. "Turning one's enemies into allies. Immense abilities of adapting to their environment. But with just a few... kinks in the design that doomed the project."

“We’re leaving,” Max snapped. “I don’t care if these fragging things are in hibernation; we need to regroup. Find a tactical edge.”

“Seconded,” Theo swiftly replied. “Everyone back to the ship. Now.”

V’Kriish motioned to the far corner, where the remains of several pods lay in fleshy tatters. “Evidently, several of the smaller Vanguard have already awoken to protect the nest. But each nest produces only handful of the larger, Carver caste, and they still slumber. We’ll simply have to use caution when we…”

He trailed off as a clawed limb burst through a cocoon a little way off. They all stepped back, weapons raised, as the entire structure fell apart, spilling fluid all over the metal grating in a sickly flood.

“Ah,” V’Kriish said, in a sheepish tone. “We changed the ambient temperature when we opened the door. Hadn’t thought of that.”

A large bulk flopped out of the ruined fluid sack, hitting the floor with a soggy thud. In the handful of milliseconds before he opened fire, Max saw six spindly limbs, a thick, red-scaled body and more teeth than he’d ever seen on one single creature. The Carver barely had time to look up before multiple searing rounds penetrated its hide, and it screeched as it was blasted backwards.

Theo’s gun was raised alongside Max’s, Hraks was yelling something about not disturbing the other pods, but it was too late.

The other cocoons were starting to burst, one by one, each of them producing identical monsters. Most were small, barely standing at the height of Max’s boots, but the Carvers towered over their smaller kin. They came up to his head, their bodies thick and powerful, possessing extra pincers just underneath their jaws that gleamed even in the low light.

“Get the door!” Max barked, firing off a shot that nailed the first creature right into its jaw and out the back of what counted as its skull. It was dead before it hit the ground, but the others were already crawling over its corpse, their scales shimmering as they faded from view.

Hraks was now firing as well, prototype rifle in one hand while tapping at the door controls with the other. The doors began to clamp shut, too slowly for Max’s liking. Just as the gap was almost closed, the door shuddered to a halt. One of the creatures faded into view, wedged in between the two solid piece of steel, desperately grasping with its claws and snapping its jaws at the air. The doors kept closing, catching its top half in a pincer grip. It let out a pained hiss, and there was a cracking of bones that echoed through the small space as the creature was literally scythed in two. Its top half – jaws and two of its six limbs – dropped to the fluid-covered floor.

Eyes narrowed, rifle still trained on the thing’s half corpse, Max made to move forward. Theo put a hand on his shoulder.

“We’re going,” he said. “Let’s just hope the door holds.”

“… where is V’Kriish?” Hraks said suddenly. It was just the three of them in the corridor; the Tenebrous was nowhere to be seen.

Then the air shimmered.

A Carver briefly flickered into existence as it lunged for Theo, jaws open wide enough to bite off his entire torso. The Corporate hadn’t lowered his guard or his pistol, nailing the creature with a charged shot down its throat that sent it careening back along the corridor. Max and Hraks were already firing, but the last they saw was the monster fading back into its camouflage, darting back and forth to dodge their shots.

They had now backed off to the stairwell, the metal door still lying on the floor. Max scooped up the door, holding it by the handle in front of him like a makeshift shield. A roar escaped his lips as he advanced back down the corridor, building speed as he drew closer to where he judged the shimmering shape to be. There was a sickly crunch as metal collided with the tangle of limbs and the massive Legion soldier pushed the Carver all the way to the door to the maintenance room. Max pinned the creature between the two surfaces, ignoring the slashing claws that were tearing chunks out of his arms and leaving bloody gashes along his face. With his free hand, he swung his rifle around the other side of the shield and fired at point blank range.

Only once the thing had collapsed to the floor in a tangled heap and completely stopped moving did Max finally let go, staggering back as his shield clattered to the ground.

With the most immediate threat now lying dead on the floor, Max allowed himself a foolish moment of relief. For a brief second, his shoulders relaxed. Of course, that was when one of the gleaming pincers pierced the door, as if it were made of paper.

“Max!” Theo warned, but there was no need. The soldier was already backing off as more slashes appeared all over the solid wall of metal, hacking through at incredible speed.

“Biotic camouflage…” Hraks was muttering. “This isn’t just some chemical weapon left over from the war. They have been reworked.”

“Drool over the science later, run now,” Theo snapped, already dashing towards the outer stairwell, Texos floating after him.

Max made sure Hraks and Theo were clear before unclipping his belt of grenades. Activating the master switch, he tossed the entire thing down the corridor, where the row of blinking lights painted a red glow over the walls. He cast one final look at the weakening barrier, then sprinted up the stairs after his comrades. Max only made it up two flights when the explosion ripped through the floor, muffled by the distance but enough to make the entire staircase shake. Emerging into the deserted upper corridor, Max let out the breath he’d been holding since the first moment those maintenance doors had opened.

The emergency lighting along the floor had turned from yellow to crimson, registering the nearby explosion, but without enough power to do anything about it besides blanketing the ship in an even eerier colour. To their left was one long window that ran the entire length of the corridor, giving them a panoramic view of the planet beneath the freighter.

"Damn," Theo sighed, still breathing heavily. "Lampwick is not going to be happy."

Max opened his mouth to point out the skewed priorities, then thought better of it. "That probably just slowed them down. Let's keep moving."

Hraks shook her head. "Not without V'Kriish."

"Hate to say it, but she's right," Theo grumbled. He pushed himself off the wall. "He's part of our crew. And I want an explanation as to why he snuck away in the middle of a firefight."

Before Max could reply that he didn't care one fragging inch for where that coward had stowed himself, their earpieces crackled to life.

"Is ANYONE listening?" said Rachel's fuzzy, exasperated voice. "HELLO?! Or am I not the only one with ghost problems?"

"We're here," Theo replied, two fingers to his ear. "Just had a run in with what's left of the crew. You're saying they're on the ship?"

"They've TAKEN the ship," came the angry reply. "So get your butts down here pronto, or I'm taking her back by myself."

Theo took a moment to engage in some extremely unbusinesslike language before once again raising a hand to his comms device. "Rachel, do not go in alone. We're coming to you, but there are more on board."

"If we wait, we might not have a ship to come back to. Sorry, but I'm not gonna let that happen. Swagger out."

"Rachel, don't–" Theo began, before his expression darkened and his hand dropped to his side. "Cut me off, sure..."

"Even with just a few of them on board..." Hraks said, trailing off.

Max got the gist. Already, he was taking off towards the elevator at a run. Theo barked orders, told him to stay with the group, that they needed to find the other Nephilim... but the Legion soldier was already focused on a new mission. The mere thought of Rachel running into that ship alone was an iron barrier that made his boss' words fade to nothing.

The elevator doors slid open, and Max stepped inside. He knew he was being a poor soldier. His first commanding officer would be turning in his grave, had there been enough of him left to bury after the bio-drone strike. But he wasn't on Cerberus Prime now. There were no officers giving him commands. There was only a friend who'd need his assault rifle by her side to take back their home.

And afterwards, if there was both time and an unsatisfactory explanation, he'd very slowly rip off V'Kriish's tentacles, one by one.

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It was an odd feeling, regret. V'Kriish may not have been feeling it in any great force, but there it was: a mild burning at the back of his mind. He slunk into the communications room, not making a single sound as he went. The others would be fine he told himself, booting up the outdated records system. Six screens flared to life in front of him, illuminating the room. They're mercenaries. They shoot things for a living.

The twinge remained. Perhaps if he'd been more forthcoming, cautioned them from the beginning...

Then you'd have no time for 'this'.

The old Tenebrous used his small hands to tap away at the keys, searching for the precise data logs that he needed. Security footage of the Calvera began to play, all of it mundane and routine. His eyes scanned the screens as he tapped the key to increase the footage speed.

It would, of course, be obvious when the event took place.

Finally, he saw the crew: Kaltorans, Legion, Corporate, even a few Twi-Far – steadily succumb to the sudden explosion of spores. Those at work, eating in the mess hall, relaxing in their bunks... the infection seemed to sweep across the six screens. First came the paralysis. Then the convulsions. Soon, they'd develop a powerful overwhelming instinct to gather together for mass hibernation and transformation.

The screens steadily cleared of life as the crew made their way down to the cargo bay, their bodies already leaking the necessary cocktail of fluids and enzymes. V'Kriish pinpointed the very beginning of the footage and tapped a few more keys. Sinking back onto a small chair that was most definitely not made for a being of his shape, the Nephilim watched as the records were erased before his eyes, and tried not to think about what was happening down below.

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"Nothing!" Theo exclaimed. He lowered the hand he'd been using to activate his earpiece, then clenched a fist in building frustration. "Max isn't answering. Rachel isn't answering. V'Kriish certainly isn't answering. Don't suppose you're planning on going AWOL?"

Keeping vigil on the still-smoking hole to the maintenance stairwell, Hraks turned to shoot him a condescending look. "You know full well I am not, captain."

Theo swallowed, running a hand through his hair. His tone softened. "Sorry. Just... times like this don't exactly make me feel worthy of the title."

Hraks placed a hand on his shoulder. Her expression was stoic as she looked into his eyes.

"You are correct," she stated. "At times like this, you do not seem much like a captain."

Theo returned her blank look. After tossing around a few emotions in his head, he strangely settled on relief. At least Hraks could always be relied upon to be Hraks.

"I am also here," Texos chimed in. As was tradition, Theo ignored the drone.

"Anyway," Hraks continued, now tapping her palm scanner, "Short range motion sensors are detecting movement two floors up, in the comms division. Perhaps V'Kriish got lost?"

"Then let's go get him, and get the frag out of here."

They took off at a jog to look for an alternative stairwell, taking a right down a roomier corridor lined with large steel doors.

"Any chance you're picking up more of those things?" he asked, as they went. Hraks raised the scanner.

"I can increase the parameters, see if any more are…"

She slowed her pace with a sharp intake of breath. Theo spun to face her, seeing Hraks' pale face bathed in the glow of her scanner. A soft series of beeps emanated from the device as her head snapped downwards.

"Get back!" she warned, just as a scuttling figure shimmered into view right as it was about to latch onto Theo's ankle. He lashed out with a kick, catching it under the jaw and sending it rolling back a couple of feet. It hissed, already scrambling upright and regaining its camouflage as the air in the corridor beyond flickered, like in a heat haze. More were coming.

They turned to go back the way they came, but that end of the corridor was beginning to fill with shimmers of its own: more creatures from below. Burned flesh and seared scales seemingly hovered in mid-air, as if they'd mindlessly crawled through the flaming debris and had been stripped of their cloaking as their scales had peeled off. From both sides came the sounds of snapping jaws.

"Door," Theo muttered through gritted teeth, as Texos buzzed to the door and began to network with the keypad.

Using slow, careful movement, Theo was adjusting the slider on his heavy rail pistol when the first one finally lunged, lowering its cloak only at the final second. Having felt the movement in the air, the Corp deftly stepped out of the way of the scything teeth, unloading shots into the thing's head almost at point blank range. The bullets tore through its entire body, leaving the front of its torso a heap of smoking flesh.

Another skittered forward, and Theo's pistol flashed downwards. Two missed shots left tiny craters in the floor, but a third shot caught it in mid-air, sending it reeling back into its companions in a trail of smoke. On his other side, Hraks had dropped to a crouch and was laying down a sustained burst of covering fire. Most of her shots whistled harmlessly through the air to strike the walls and ceiling, with a few finding their mark on the larger, bulkier creatures. The Carvers seemed content to stand back, letting the smaller Vanguard throw themselves at the duo to attract fire while they positioned themselves to strike.

"Anytime," Theo hissed at Texos, twisting his neck to where he heard the sound of claws scrabbling along the left-hand wall. His instincts were correct as it came at him, although it managed to latch its jaws onto his gun arm before he could react. The Corporate hissed in pain as the teeth penetrated his protective suit and drew blood. He swapped his gun hand and blasted the creature off at point blank range in one smooth motion. Hraks swore as one of them latched onto the corner of her coat, only getting the barest grip before she grabbed one of its legs and ripped it off. It met its end being slammed to the ground, head crushed under her boot heel, but now the creatures were getting bolder.

"They learn," Hraks said over her shoulder. "They adapt."

"And we get tired," Theo muttered back. They had only the tiniest window to respond to each attack.

"Complete!" Texos confirmed, pressing one final key that caused the door to slide open. Theo and Hraks stood back to back, keeping the creatures at bay with a hail of fire as they stepped over the threshold. Theo slammed his hand onto the inside door controls, and the thick door snapped shut.

The room was lined with tools, tables and pieces of heavy machinery – a repair workshop of some kind – but there was little time to take in the poorly lit sight. The larger creatures began to tear at the door with their glittering pincers, ripping away chunks and creating holes that wouldn't stay small for long.

"They brought the whole nest," Hraks murmured.

"Wonderful," Theo replied, clutching his bleeding arm and watching as another chunk of door fell away. "Just… perfect."

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V'Kriish watched in satisfaction as the offending footage vanished, never to be seen by prying eyes. A potentially embarrassing diplomatic event had been averted. All that remained was to disable the ship's emergency thrusters; it would lose orbit and burn up in the atmosphere of the planet long before any official investigations could begin.

The past records were deleted, the screens returned to current footage. On one screen: Rachel and Max heading into the dark cargo bay of the Galatèa. Even from this distance, the fury on the Kaltoran's face was unmistakeable.

Despite his best efforts, V'Kriish couldn't help his eyes wandering over the selection of displays, drawn to the only other source of movement. His Emissary and the Corporate were sealed inside a repair station, the only exit blocked by a small crowd of the creatures. On the monitor, the outside hallway looked like a series of strange distortions, with the occasional creature blinking into view as it became overexcited and dropped its cloaking for a moment. V'Kriish estimated the Corporate and Emissary's survival duration at around two minutes, possibly five.

Tearing his eyes away, he spun to a second console and brought up the ship's main controls. Life support, auxiliary power, navigation… the codes his informant had provided granted him access to it all. V'Kriish hesitated, one tentacle hovering over the kill switch for the thrusters.

His crew weren't the mission. They were merely the means; now, witnesses. The loss of a promising Emissary was a devastating blow, but he could still apply the data from her interactions with her chosen social group. Once he acquired an escape pod and returned to Eden, he could make more just like her.

Still, the old Tenebrous couldn't hit the switch. Not just yet. The movement out of the corner of his eye taunted him.

With a drawn-out groan of sheer irritation, V'Kriish swiped at the screen. He now needed an entirely different set of controls.

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The steel door was steadily turning to more of a steel scrap heap as pieces fell away with each strike. Hraks unleashed a burst of pinpoint rifle fire through one of the gaps, but it merely sent one creature reeling. Tiny shimmers began to appear in the room as the Vanguards scrawled through the holes. Theo blasted anything that moved, while Texos had unsheathed its shock-stick attachment. The drone swooped downwards, electrocuting a scuttling monster that tried to latch onto its master's ankle. The creature rolled onto its back, lightly smoking.

Theo wanted to suggest something. Anything. But the equipment in the room lay dead around them, the walls sealed, ceiling high with a vent that was impossible to reach. Another section of door fell away, now almost big enough for one of the larger creatures to squeeze through. More distortions appeared in the room, on the walls and crawling across the equipment.

Theo and Hraks backed up almost to the very end of the room, Texos floating alongside as they fired at any hint of movement. A couple of creatures fell to stray shots, but now the door was ready to buckle. The sounds of snapping jaws swelled to an advancing crescendo, mingled with the soft warning tone as Theo's weapon complained of low munitions. Finally, the bulk of the door simply fell away, and they caught a brief glimpse of the handful of massive creatures in the corridor beyond before they engaged their biotic camouflage and pushed their way into the room.

As if to mock their victims, the handful of Carvers funnelled into the room with a leisurely pace with only flickering camouflage, spreading themselves out in a rough semicircle to block the exit. Their heads twitched, enormous teeth dripping fluid. Then a cloaking ripple ran through the massive monsters, and they faded out of sight.

Keeping his pistol raised, Theo reached down to unsheathe his shock baton, more angry than anything else that some stupid monsters would be what finally killed him.

The change in the room was almost instant as the ceiling vent burst open, flooding the room with freezing air. His hair whipping with the force of the wind, Theo exchanged a baffled glance with Hraks, but she wasn't looking in his direction. Her eyes were narrow, gaze locked onto their foes. Before Theo could ask why, he noticed the scuttling creatures were now fading into permanent view, hissing and stumbling as they shook their heads. The Carvers seemed the most affected, rearing up on their back legs and slashing wildly at the air with their pincers.

"Their adaptation isn't instant," called a husky voice from the broken doorway. Theo looked to see V'Kriish's large head peering through at them. "Not to such a rapid temperature change," he finished, in a cheerful tone as he slithered into the room.

Theo eyed the Tenebrous with distrust. "Slunk out so you could conveniently save the day?"

"Finish them off!" Hraks snapped, taking aim at the now-visible creatures with her rifle and unloading a barrage of fire. One of the Carvers barrelled forward, unsteady in its feet but clearly enraged, pincers hissing as they swiped at the air.

V'Kriish swept forward, his entire body moving like water as the creature tried and failed to pierce his body. It was entangled in tentacles before it could even react, and there was a swift series of sickly crunches. One of its spindly legs snapped like a dry twig, forcing the Carver off balance. Theo whipped out his shock baton, jamming it straight into the thing's throat and cranking the power up to the maximum voltage.

V'Kriish loosened his grip and unwrapped his tentacles as the massive beast fell sideways, smoke pouring from its mouth.

"See?" V'Kriish explained, smoothly sliding back to his comrades. "They're not too challenging."

Theo clenched his jaw, not dignifying that with an answer as the creatures rallied against the cold, scuttling towards them in a sea of teeth and fury. If Rachel and Max hadn't liberated his fragging ship by the time they got back to the hangar, he'd be putting ads out for a new crew.

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Max and Rachel stood in the Galatèa's main corridor, surrounded by the bodies of tiny scuttling monsters. It was a grotesque scene, with fluids and scattered limbs coating different parts of the ship.

They were down to the last creature, and Rachel was taking her time with this one. Max watched, semi transfixed, as the Kaltoran girl nailed it through the head with her SMG as it tried to lunge at her, then began using her already blood-slicked boot heel to stomp its body into chunks. She was yelling something about it being 'her junk pile'.

Max didn't want to ask. Standing awkwardly off to one side, mostly forgotten, he was already wondering if she'd even needed his help.

It was great fun to watch, though.

* * *

The dark shape of the Calvera grew smaller on the horizon as the Galatèa made its exit. In the well-lit space of the galley there was a mixture of emotions, but only Rachel seemed to be in good spirits. She sat back in her chair, clothing still stained with blood and bits of insect leg stuck in her braids, contentedly sipping a mug of geist. The adrenaline hadn't quite died down, and she was happy to enjoy the high while it lasted.

In the far corner, Texos sat charging in its cradle, networking with the auto-pilot at the same time.

"Not a total loss," Theo finally announced, collapsing the holographic mission data. Despite arriving back caked in monster fluids and sporting several bite wounds, the Corporate now wore a fresh suit, his hair as slick as ever. "Lampwick won't be happy about the damage, but he'll get the answers he needs."

"Because that's our fault?" Max muttered, leaning against the wall with his arms tightly folded.

> "Ley Dust is an invisible – but detectable – resource that allows a spacecraft or Jump Gate to open a portal into Jump Space… oh, and there are some rumours of it allowing psionics to mess with minds and time, but we're here just for the fundamentals." Old Adam Vibe was nearly blind, but he knew his great-grandchildren were already getting bored. "If you want to be an engineer on a family ship you don't really need to know how the Jump Drives work – no one fully does – but you need to understand how to fix them with salvaged parts, and the broad principals at work when a ship Jumps."
>
> Blind Vibe felt around his desk for a holo-book, a simple metal tube with scratch markings on the side to allow identification. "This book will give you an introduction on Ley Lines, Ley Storms and Ley Voids."

V'Kriish was slurping another of his fluid packs, the Memling snoozing in what passed for his lap as he gently stroked it between the ears.

"It only took a little chunk off," the elderly Nephilim grumbled as Hraks swaddled his blood-soaked head, leaving half of his face coated in medi-bands.

After almost having to physically restrain Max when they'd returned to the ship, Theo had managed to explain the situation; or at least, his limited version of events. Rachel wasn't willing to accept all of it, but the Tenebrous had saved the crew. She now felt a strange sense of respect, awkwardly nestling alongside her apprehension.

Max didn't look like he knew what to think.

"They'll find out about the Trojanix Seed," Hraks pointed out, turning to V'Kriish. "There will be an investigation."

The elderly Tenebrous merely shrugged, the picture of innocence, but Rachel caught a glint in his eye. Finally, he laid down the package and used his long tongue to clean his protruding jaws before speaking.

"While we're out here, I did see some rather interesting readings in the Calvera's databanks. You know… while I was trying to save all of your lives."

He raised the transmitted data as a scrolling hologram. "Automatically gathered while it was in orbit. That planet? Entirely unexplored."

Hraks leaned in closer, her eyes narrow with interest. She waved two fingers, and a floating image of a ruined city with spherical buildings expanded to fill the table. "Incredible. I've never seen an abandoned settlement like this before."

"Archon?" Theo asked.

Hraks narrowed her eyes. "Perhaps. Or it could be even older… possible Human."

"Worth a trip, I think," V'Kriish suggested. "As we're 'in the neighbourhood'?"

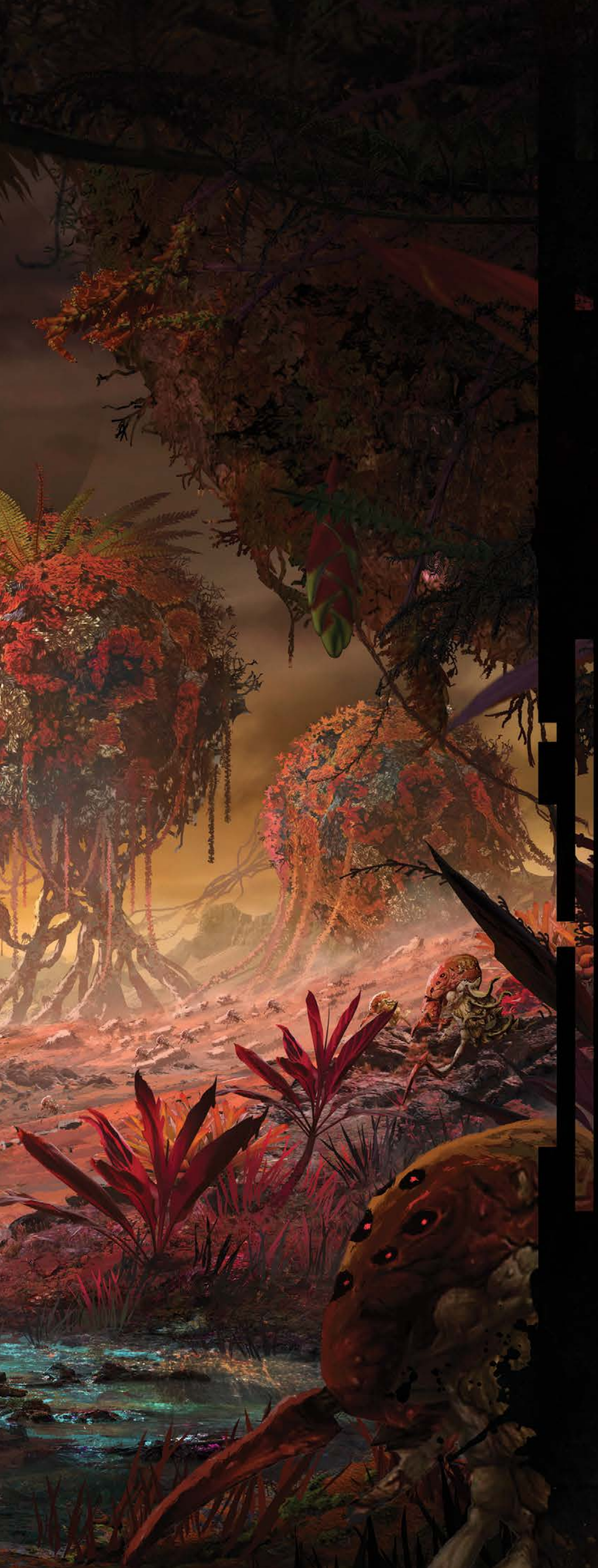
Theo stroked his chin. "Max?"

For the longest moment, the Legion said nothing. Then, staring at the floor and speaking in a low voice almost too quiet to hear: "He's the navigation expert. I say we go for it."

"Rachel?"

"I'm game," she said, feeling that familiar pulse of excitement. "Just… gimme some time to nap and shower first."

"Alright then," Theo finished. He leaned back in his chair with a tight smile. "Texos… turn us around. We're not done here just yet."



History

I know not what emotions were felt by the people of Hallow's Triumph during the final days of the Great X'ion War. For centuries, their city stood as a beacon; a stalwart symbol of the Archons' victorious reign.

Malvanas was a blasted hellscape of a planet, consumed by a terraforming experiment gone horrifically wrong. The air could kill in seconds. The flora and fauna were toxic, ravenous and insane.

Advanced biohazard shielding, nutritional converters, entirely new alloys that have been lost to time; it was a miracle that the city of Hallow's Triumph ever existed in the first place. 'The Impossible City', a magnet for the old empires finest scientific minds.

What advancements must have been dreamt in that place at the height of its power!

When the war came, they may have considered their city an impenetrable fortress. They weren't to know what X'ion had created, or the incredible adaptive abilities of the Nephilim. Once their enemies learned to thrive in the toxic wastes, Hallow's Progress was surrounded on all sides, with nowhere to escape.

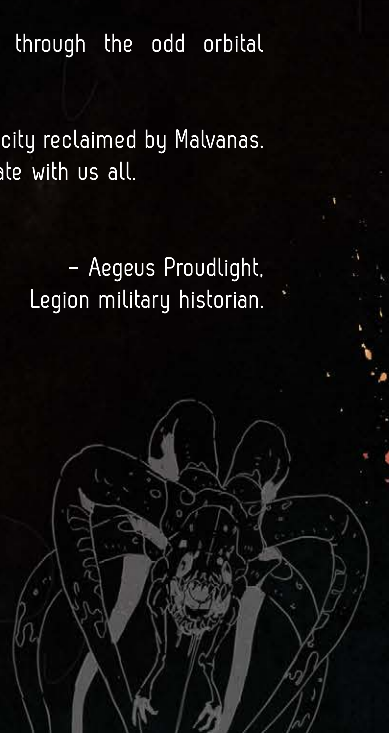
It only took a few weeks for their shielding to fail. Unreliable records say the Nephilim simply retreated and watched from afar as the citizens were brutally wiped out by the toxins and beasts of the planet they'd so proudly thought to be conquered.

The Nephilm did aid the situation through the odd orbital bombardment and fly-by bombing.

The scientific discoveries are lost, the city reclaimed by Malvanas. And yet, may the lessons learned resonate with us all.

Always have an escape route.

– Aegeus Proudlight,
Legion military historian.



Humanity

"We know very little of Humanity. Sure, we know some of their last few hundred years… but that's a small slice of a very big pie. If we look at those final years we see much violence, sickness and death. Yet even in those dark days there was some light.

Archon records of those times also speak of beauty, art and fun, especially during their days when they were alone with their creators.

I wonder how different our universe would have been if the Archons had shown their creations the same care… or maybe the problem is that they did, and the records lie once more."

– Alexander Might,
'In the Footsteps of Gods, Vol IV'.

It is over 15,000 years into the future, and Humanity has been dead for 3,000 of these, but they did not die out before leaving innumerable permanent marks on the galaxy, such as the Ley Lines that allow faster-than-light travel, the terraforming of countless worlds and the creation of the Archons. Many think of them as mythical god-like progenitors, while others see them as a cautionary tale.

Mythical Earth

The first Archons were told by their creators that Humanity originated from a system that orbited a yellow star called Sol and that their beautiful homeworld was named Earth. These scientists did not tell the Archons where Sol was located or who had created Humanity. Even the Humans had lost the knowledge of their origins to the mists of time.

Reality Fracture & Ley Lines

» See Ley Lines & Ley Dust write-up from pg: 58.

Though opinions vary, most think of Human history as starting with the Reality Fracture. No one knows who or what caused it, but everyone feels the consequences. For an unknown amount of time Humanity had been unable to leave their home star system, until they broke the universe ever so slightly by creating impossibly long, thin and invisible cracks in reality that are known as Ley Lines.

An invisible and mysterious substance known as Ley Dust leaked from these cracks, spreading far out into space. Humanity was able to harness this new substance to create portals that would allow them to travel between stars.

With each passing year these Ley Lines and Ley Dust spread a little further, allowing access to an ever-increasing number of worlds. It is not known how far these cracks have spread, but it is thought that they have not yet reached the edges of this galaxy.

Electronic Tech Singularity

Within just two thousand years of the Reality Fracture Humanity achieved an electronic-based technology singularity. Their power and abilities would be so great and incomprehensible to the people of the present age that they would be looked upon as magicians.

While the bulk of their achievements were focused around electronic technology, Humanity also branched out into many other fields, quite possibly pushing into realms of science that were so advanced that they encompassed multiple seemingly disconnected branches. Most notable amongst these achievements was their ability to terraform worlds.

Golden Age

With the means to colonize countless worlds Humanity entered what is known as their Golden Age. This was a time of peace and abundance that would last for thousands of years, but it was also a slow walk towards isolation and rot.

Humanity was spread thinly across the galaxy, having programmed titanic robots to terraform more worlds than they had need of (and they continue to terraform worlds to this day). They also became withdrawn and isolated themselves from one another, with entire planets being occupied by only a few colonies… or none at all.

Most Human settlements during this age were guarded and well hidden. Even if a planet had multiple Human settlements it was likely they did not know of each other's presence unless there was a city (which were small by modern standards) among them.

Many speculate as to why Humans – who were known to be social entities – acted like this. Many suspect that there were great wars during the first years of the singularity, or great social events from before the Reality Fracture that pushed them towards distrust.

With excess space and resources there was no need for individuals to mix with those they did not want to. Each Human was a social island and only associated with those who did not challenge them.

Genetic Erosion

The fall of Humanity was inevitable. Billions died alone in cloaked houses plugged up to perpetual entertainment machines. They forgot how to struggle and caved to every pressure. Despite having access to untold scientific knowledge, they became fools and raged like spoiled children. They were served by robots they could no longer build or fix, and lived on worlds created by titanic machines they could not understand.

But the slow killer that pushed Humanity to take its final futile stand against extinction was expected by none. Over thousands of years Humanity's genome had succumbed to genetic erosion, making their entire population vulnerable to sickness, birth defects and a wide range of biological ailments that they had long forgotten how to treat.

Billions of surviving Humans fled their isolated homes to gather together as their resources fell into decline for the first time in memory. Massive sickly cities sprung up around the Human empire, each to varying degrees of success. These new societies quickly stratified, as those with resources and knowledge took control of those without. The most prominent of these dominant groups was the Makers, those who held the most shreds of advanced knowledge from Humanity's past.

Second to the Makers were the Keepers, those who controlled the Jump Gates that allowed resources to travel between cities. The Keepers did not know how to build Jump Gates, but they were able to keep them functioning longer than most.

The Makers implemented complex economic management systems on all Human cities that were designed to funnel a maximum amount of resources to them before a city would inevitably self-destruct. They claimed to be using these resources to save Humanity from extinction, but in truth they had abandoned all plans to do so and were focusing on alternative solutions such as the Archon project, and possibly others. Within just a few hundred years all Humans would be dead.

Age of Gnawing

During its final era Humanity desperately fought to survive, turning on each other for resources and plundering the hidden homes of their ancestors for forgotten technologies. With the Keepers hoarding Jump Drives and spacecraft these conflicts were increasingly pushed into the urban and digital spaces.

Street warfare was brutal and mimicked secret parallel conflicts that were going on within the political, information and economic realms between the factions that controlled the cities.

At first these powerful factions stayed their hands and sought to build up the cities… but this only lasted as long as they believed they had a future and could maintain control; a delusion that was impossible to keep as they discovered that the Makers had no intentions of saving them or Humanity, and were using them as pawns to fatten up their cities so that they could be harvested.

The final years saw brutal high-tech combats between the remaining powerful factions, but in time, all fell to the Makers.

Archons

» See Archon Empire write-up from pg: 52.

Having consumed the last of the Human cities, the Makers set the final stages of their plans into motion. They had established four great space stations (Arcadia, Edoni, Paradise and Xana), each loaded up with resources, data banks of reclaimed scientific knowledge, storerooms of art, hangers of spacecraft and with multiple Jump Gates to distant stars.

They then gave birth to the genetically engineered Archons, the species that they had carefully crafted to replace Humanity and to inherit their fallen empire. They raised these Archons as their own children and allowed themselves – the last Humans – to die of old age in peaceful rural homesteads.

Factions

Humanity had countless internal factions over its long and mostly forgotten history, each with their own goals, fears, resources and perspectives. The factions listed here are a tiny sample of what existed during the Age of Gnawing and have contributed in some way to the formation of the current age.

Keepers

These grotesque and incredibly obese Humans controlled armies of robots and slaves to maintain the Jump Gates that formed vital links between the cities. But these connections would be cut without remorse as each city collapsed in on itself.

The Keepers were incredibly corrupt and charged exorbitant fees for the use of their Gates. They also lied about their abilities, as they only had the skills to activate the Jump Gates and to repair them with reclaimed spacecraft Jump Drives. The Keepers were kept in power by the Makers, who saw them as a useful tool whose greed made them easy to predict and to control.

Makers

Most Humans would go their entire lives without ever seeing a Maker. They hid their cloaked forms away in large obsidian monasteries where they worked tirelessly to reverse engineer ancient Human technologies. Each Maker was incredibly gifted and zealously dedicated to their secret plan to see Humanity die out and be replaced by their genetically engineered Archons. A plan that eventually succeeded.

Many assume the Makers gained their position through force, but in truth, they were given their power willingly. Humans wanted to be disconnected consumers; they wanted others to think for them and to supply their needs. The Makers used this to enslave all of Humanity to produce resources for their plans. However, the Makers did not see themselves as evil, instead believing they were performing a great deed by aiding the replacement of Humanity.

Yalluma Clan

» See Mechonid write-up from pg: 142.
» See Palantor write-up from pg: 133.

The Yalluma Clan was a secretive research group that specialized in digital networks and AI. For two hundred years they attempted to create a true AI that could exponentially improve itself, and possibly result in an intelligence that could plot a safe plan forward for Humanity. But alas, they were forced to alter their plans when they learned that the Makers were taking the resources of their cities and steering all of Humanity towards self-destruction.

The Yalluma Clan may have failed at their intended goal, but they did succeed at saving millions of Human personalities by uploading their minds to a vast Palantor Network. The geniuses that created this digital masterpiece may still be in the network… or possibly harvested by the Mechonids.

Archon Empire

- **Species Stats (Nemesis NPC):**
  - Gain 3 Aug Traits, ignoring any associated attribute requirements.
  - Strong Hit: **Creator's Voice:** All Legion and Tolatl in the area must pass a Resolve Skill Roll of 12 (16 if they're an NPC) or obey all of your commands for a short amount of time (ie: 1 Turn).
  - All enemies who defeat you gain 2 (3 if Legion or Tolatl) free Research units.

- **Example Names:** Divinitus, Exaltius, Omnus, Solaris.
- **Example Family Names:** Ai, Dios, Peak, Puralia, Uno.
- **Common Characteristics:** Aloof, dedicated, intelligent, proud.

- **Creator:** Humanity (Maker faction).
- **Average Height:** 2.24m
- **Average Life Span:** 340 years.
- **Population:** 0.

"We're all made in the image of our creators, and for the Archons this was not all of Humanity, but the Maker faction. The Makers enslaved all to further their agenda, thinking that any means justified their greater good. They foolishly thought their great evils would be only for a season, but they were played on repeat by the slave-making Archons for three thousand years. Their means became the end."

– Aurelia Might, Legion Exilia,
anti-Auxilia slavery advocate.

The Archons were genetically engineered by Humanity to replace them as the stewards of the galaxy and to inherit their fallen empire. However the Archons did not wish to follow in Humanities footsteps by focusing on electronic technology, exploration, or the colonisation of the stars. They became obsessed with the nature of their own creation, genetic engineering and the pursuit of perfection.

Just before their passing the Makers gave them four great space stations that were known as the Quattuoria. These were designed to give the Archons a foothold in the galaxy and to act as a temporary starting point for their expansion. Within just a few years of the last Human's death, the Edoni station was retrofitted with the gene-labs that had been used to create the Archons themselves.

Thus started a three thousand year tradition of genetic engineering that would culminate in the creation of the X'ion and the death of all Archons.

Physiology

All known Archons were impressive Human-like specimens: tall, muscular and intelligent with coloured skin. Humans engineered them to have incredibly complex DNA with over twenty times the information of their own, but these complex and high powered bodies came with steep energy requirements. Archons were forced to consume incredibly dense food and required technological assistance while pregnant or sick. While the birth of an Archon was a relatively straightforward matter, procreation required the use of a blast-proofed room and industrial coolers. They were possibly the first major genetically engineered creations of Humanity, and were a reflection of their Maker faction creators who had access to unfathomable resources. It would be incredibly difficult for an Archon to survive in the wild without access to advanced technology.

It would not be a stretch to presume that Humanity expected the Archons to continue their 12,000 year-long legacy of increased energy production and consumption. The Archons were expected to slowly grow in number and build facilities that would fuel their needs... it was never anticipated that they would genetically engineer hundreds of servant species and modify their own bodies.

As the Archons became increasingly driven towards the goal of creating the perfect species they also became progressively more aware of their own shortcomings. When creating new species they frequently spliced their best work into themselves, or grafted components (both organic and mechanical) directly onto their own bodies. These practices grew in frequency after the cultural split that followed their creation of the X'ion, so much so that each Archon faction increasingly took on a distinctive physiological style.

Creations

The Archons were fixated on the idea that they could create the perfect species, but this was also coupled with their need to generate resources for themselves and their projects. To achieve these goals they set themselves to the task of genetically engineering hundreds of sentient species, and countless flora and fauna.

Some species were created to simply test ideas and gene weaving methods, while others were created for a specific role. Those that were deemed most successful (such as the Kaltorans, Ursai, Twilinger and Mondians) were given large areas of space with many star systems to rule, while those that were deemed a failure (such as the Vargarti) were neglected. The Archons played open favourites with their creations, heaping love and praise upon some, while scorning and neglecting others.

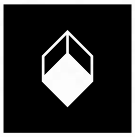
Designer Note:
We have purposefully not defined the full size of the Archon's empire or all of their creations. This was done to encourage your creativity and to give your games a sense of exploration where nobody knows what is out there.

Overlords

While each of their favoured species was given autonomy to rule their nations as they saw fit, they always did so under the undisputed rule of the Archons who created them. Each nation's economy was tightly managed by those Archons, ensuring political stability and a steady flow of resources. There are records of civil wars and rebellions, but all were small.

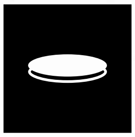
Quattuoria Stations

The Archons had no known world of their own, instead living throughout their empire where they were served by large staffs of non-Archon attendants, guards and technicians. The only places that they considered truly their own were the four Quattuoria space stations that the Humans had made for them. All were heavily modified over the millennia and went missing during the Great X'ion War.



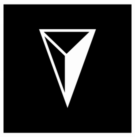
Arcadia

This huge cube-shaped station was destroyed during the first millennia of the Archon empire when it crossed a Ley Line that sent portions of the station through time. It was salvaged and rebuilt over Kumba Prime - capitol world of the Ursai - where it was captured by traitor forces as a prelude to the Great War and used to funnel Nephilim infiltrators throughout the Archon Empire.



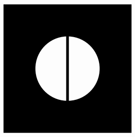
Edoni

This disc-shaped space station was the first to be retrofitted with gene weaving technology, taken from the very labs that created the Archons. As the smallest of the Quattuoria stations it was relatively mobile and spent much of its time moving about the Archon's empire, yet it would always return to the Kaltoran nation which it helped to create. It was last sighted fleeing into Mondian space through the Halo Nebula.



Paradise

No one knows where the inverted pyramid-shaped Paradise station resided, as its location was always hidden from public knowledge. Paradise is thought to have been the least modified of the Quattuoria stations and is said to have created both the Legion and the Mechonids. If true, there is little doubt that it is currently under Mechonid control and houses a Palantor network.



Xana

A golden sphere-shaped station that resided on the edge of the Twilinger capital system of Prism, Xana was the birthplace of the X'ions and was destroyed by the final X'ion itself during the Great War. Xana was the grandest of the Quattuoria stations, housed their most advanced laboratories, and seated the Archon parliament before the Fractured Age.

Creation of the X'ions

It was a rare and momentous event for the Archons to attempt to create a 'perfect' (or 'X'ion,' in the Archon tongue) species. They would plan for such an ambitious project for an entire generation, pooling their resources and scientific knowledge for decades before they even started the physical gene weaving process. The title of 'perfect' was so lofty a goal that many Archons did not value it for its achievability, but for its unifying power as a shared goal. It is thought that all but one attempt at the creation of a perfect species failed spectacularly.

After three thousand years the Archons did create a species that they deemed perfect, granting them the unique title of X'ion. Twelve were made in the Xana station, and the Archons poured their love and affection out upon them.

However, before the X'ions could be given their own nation to populate and rule, the Archons started to argue over the true nature of perfection. Many thought that such an achievement was impossible and that granting the title to their first surviving attempt was foolish, while others challenged the dissenters to name a single way that the X'ions were not superior to all life.

When the Archons withdrew the title of perfection from their creations the X'ions raged against them. The Archons acted swiftly and flew an armada of ships and troops to the Xana station, killing all of the X'ions... but one. That one lone X'ion stole a spacecraft and flew into deep uncharted space beyond the Black Reach Nebula towards the galactic core. The Archons quickly abandoned their pursuit of the X'ion as their society began to fracture along ideological rifts that would form multiple large factions.

Fractured Age

The final age of the Archons between the creation of the X'ion and its return was a tumultuous two centuries that were marked by factionalism and decline. With each passing decade the Archons and their nations grew apart and increasingly focused on their own goals.

The Archons also largely withdrew from public life and were rarely seen by their creations. Those Archons without subordinate nations were forced into the darker crevices of society where they performed morally questionable experiments and criminal activities against the more prosperous Archons and their creations.

Language: Archon

The Archon language is a detail-oriented language, making it perfect for communicating technical or scientific knowledge. However, because of this, and the stigma it often has from Corporates, it is not widely used and remains the language of the educated people of the Haven system.

Many technical manuals are written in Archon; therefore, it is an essential language for those of a scientific persuasion. The large vocabulary (of over a million distinct root-words) means that the language can elegantly communicate new and complex concepts or discoveries in any field. Archon also makes for exceptional poetry, especially when read aloud, owing to its melodious pronunciation.

Language: Archon Code (AC)

This fast and simple to use programing language has its roots in Human systems that were taught to the Archons by the Makers. It operates in tandem with Archon and Human Age of Gnawing operating systems and works with moderately complex paradigms. A must-have language for those who work with Archon and late-stage Human tech, but there are better options for creating your own programs.

Factions

Strong schisms started to form throughout Archon culture following the creation of the X'ions and were further exasperated when the X'ions rebelled. These factions may have defined the final Fractured Age of the Archons, but many of them had existed in some form for thousands of years.

Divine Circles (Xana Station)

Those that held the highest positions of political power before the Fractured Age worked tirelessly to bring the Archons back into unity… but with them still on top. It was they who ordered the execution of the X'ions after the first schism, and who sacrificed the Twilinger during the early stages of the Great War to power great superweapons.

They were a pragmatic and intelligent people that were willing to do whatever it took to achieve their goals, a mindset that brought them to blows with rival factions who saw them as the embodiment of all that was wrong with the old ways.

Gnawing

Named after the final age of Humanity, this faction was mostly made up of young and disenfranchised Archons with little relative power to their kin. Not only did they have no created species under their command, they also lacked the resources and connections needed to progress themselves within Archon culture, a situation that only grew in severity as the Fractured Age progressed and the various Archon factions tightened their grip on what power they had.

Most of the Gnawing faction were confined to their homes or spacecraft to live lives of meaningless comfort, while others secretly sought to advance themselves through nefarious endeavours. It was an unpardonable shame for an Archon to work for a created species, which forced those who wanted (or needed) to work to do so in secret and outside the law.

Many of the Gnawing faction fled the empire before the Great War, but they are presumed dead as they travelled through the Black Reach Nebula and most likely encountered the X'ion and its Nephilim.

Triumvirate (Paradise Station)

These were the Archons who never truly believed in the perfection of the X'ions and who saw the fragmentation of Archon culture as proof that their people had long been on the wrong path. Partway through the Fractured Age the Triumvirate seized control of the Paradise station through subterfuge and sought to create new species that were designed to prosper without the Archons and without the expectations of perfection.

A great irony is that their legacy is the forced creation of the Legion; a servile warrior species that struggles to be self-sustaining. The Triumvirate faction were driven off Paradise in the later stages of the Great War as Halo extremists used it to create the Mechonids.

Halo (Paradise Station)

These Archons maintained many of the electronic technologies which their Human creators had passed on to them, but they made few new developments in this area. Those of the small Halo faction were particularly fixated on the great terraforming titans, those giant automated robots who spend centuries making a world habitable before moving onto a new barren world to remake. They dived deep into electronic and lost Human technology to understand these monolithic machines, with occasionally spectacular results.

It was Halo extremists who took control of the Paradise station from the Triumvirate faction to develop the Mechonids, a desperate and foolish endeavour that was supported by most of the surviving Archons.

Unending (Arcadia & Edoni Stations)

This faction was formed from many Archons whose ancestors had created the Kaltorans (on the Edoni station) and the Ursai (on the Arcadia station). They were a numerous and prosperous people who were unified in their desire to protect their wealth and power following the schisms that followed the X'ion rebelion.

Over the two centuries of the Fractured Age they split and reformed themselves multiple times, each with much bloodshed and many betrayals. Towards the end of the age the Unending were known for their suspicious natures and propensity to store up vasts amounts of resources in guarded vaults.

These two traits were their undoing in the Ursai nation as their fixation on rival Archons blinded them to the Ursai's betrayal and allowed their vast resources to be handed over to the Nephilim. In contrast, these traits greatly aided the Kaltorans as their isolated nature protected them from infiltration and their vast supplies allowed the Kaltorans to defend Haven for many years.

Xio-Integrum & Xio-Verum

These were the Archons who believed in their people's grand plan to create the perfect species right up until the very end. Some (**Xio-Integrum**) thought this was the X'ion, while others (**Xio-Verum**) believed that the 'true X'ion' was yet to be made.

The Xio were a fragmented group who were spread throughout the empire and often belonged to multiple factions (as many Archons did during their final age). Out of desperation, and with a shadow of their former resources, the Xio would perform their genetic research and experimentations with unethical practices that would have been unthinkable in all previous Archon ages.

The Divine Circles had a particular distrust of the Xio, as they saw them as dogmatic opponents to their rule, and a threat to stability. Yet in the later years of the Great War they worked with the Xio to create the Zhou, buying the Archons a few more months before their demise.

Great X'ion War

- See Archon Empire write-up from pg: 52.
- See full Nephilim write-up from pg: 113.

"People assume due to our bestial and ferocious appearance that we Nephilim won the Great War because of overwhelming numbers and brute force, but this is not the case, our ancestors largely won due to their preparation, flexibility and speed.

The Archons and their children may have had fewer warriors, but they had larger numbers and far greater resources, but every Nephilim force would attack them in new ways, with new technologies and with staggering speed. It was their minds and logistical systems that were overwhelmed. If they were not already divided and did not think their rule unchallengeable, they 'may' have held firm.

Ironically we Nephilim were also to fall due to lack of foresight. We did not think or plan beyond the Great War, our creator – the X'ion – abandoning us had never entered our minds... in the end we all lost."

– Do-Rajick,
Tenebrous Nephilim tactician.

Two hundred years after fleeing the wrath of the Archons the X'ion returned, bringing with it an armada of genetically engineered monsters that would come to be known as the Nephilim. Within just six years the large and already compromised Archon empire was obliterated by multiple Nephilim armies, killing every known Archon and almost all of their servile creations. Following the death of the final Archon the X'ion vanished without notice, abandoning its Nephilim creations to mop up what remained, and to slowly devolve into feral creatures devoid of sentience.

The X'ion

- **Creator:** Archons.
- **Physical Traits:** Unknown.
- **Population:** 1.

Almost nothing is known of the true nature of this immensely impressive creature but only a fool would deny its power: having won every engagement that it was directly involved in, and orchestrated the fall of the entire Archon empire in retaliation for their treatment of it and its kin.

While some within the Eden Brood Nephilim and Remnant cults revere the X'ion as a supreme being that will bring about a new golden age, most of Haven fear the return of this embodiment of rage and destruction. Nobody knows its final plans or where it went after the Great War, but most expect it to return at some point. Having fulfilled its revenge on the Archons, some speculate that it has retired to develop new purpose for its life or to explore the possibility of creating more of its kind.

Designer Note:

We have purposefully not defined the nature of the X'ion or given it stats. This was done to not only encourage your own ideas about what a seemingly 'perfect' creature could be, but to also allow a wide range of possible ideas about how the war started. Ie: it is possible that the X'ion never existed and the Nephilim were created by Archons who wanted to secretly test their creations (and other Archons) in the fires of war.

Pre War

Nobody knows where the Nephilim were created, but the X'ion spent decades positioning forces around the Archon empire while it infiltrated most of its nations with locally developed and externally implanted agents. These agents undermined security and defence systems, mapped Jump Gates, funnelled resources, smuggled in Nephilim forces, and nudged political policies. The most successful of these infiltrations were among the Ursai. While most non-Nephilim agents did not know who they were aiding, many Ursai did.

The Nephilim armies positioned around the empire hybernated out in the black voids of uncharted space, taking advantage of the Archon's disinterest in exploration and their inward focus. These were a mixture of both large and small forces, and were primarily activated by signals sent by scouts and hidden agents. It is quite possible that not all of these armies were activated, and some forces may still be hibernating out there in the void.

- **Remnant (Ursai):** Most of their political and military structures were under the control of agents loyal to the X'ion.

Early Years

The Great War began in earnest with the arrival of the X'ion along with its largest and most advanced forces through the Whispering Path around the edge of the Black Reach Nebula. This armada split off into three prongs towards the Twilinger, Ursai and Kaltoran nations. The X'ion itself first moved towards the Divine Circles Archon faction within the Xana Station in Twilinger space. The Divine Circles sacrificed millions of Twilinger to power immense energy-based superweapons to battle the X'ion and its Nephilim, but to little result.

Reeling from these first blows the Archons moved to mobilize their vast resources to form a defence: arming their servile species, along with the creation of the Legion and the Mechonids. The empire held some ground during this phase of the war as they were able to make use of their vast resources and fall back to defensible locations. Many Archons also maintained a sense of ethics: taking Nephilim prisoners of war and (mostly) avoiding the use of weapons of mass destruction.

- **Kaltorans:** The fragile hyper-specialized Kaltoran nation quickly crumbled under the might of the Nephilim, falling back to the Haven system as they rallied their defences.
- **Legion:** Were deployed to fight alongside most nations.
- **Remnant (Ursai):** The traitorous Ursai were in turn betrayed by the Nephilim who attacked them not long after they had aided them in attacking the Kaltorans.
- **Twi-Far (Twilinger):** Were among the first to be attacked and fled far out into uncharted space following their abuse by their Archon masters.

Later Years

Within just a few years the vast Archon empire was reduced to a few defensible positions, having been beaten back by the Nephilim on every front and having their powerful Mechonid creations turn on them.

During these later years of the war the Archons became increasingly desperate. Discarding their thin ethical codes they sought any advantage that they could gain; increasingly turning to ancient and dangerous Human technologies that they could not understand, the use of devastating biological weapons, and military tactics that saw the sacrifice of millions of their created children to buy themselves increasingly fewer gains.

- **Corporation (Vargarti):** With their Ursai wardens dead the Vargarti started to explore their homeworld of Varsphere.
- **Kaltorans:** The well-organised Kaltorans made a final stand in Haven alongside many Legion and some Archons, but were crushed by the arrival of the X'ion itself and the tacitcal skill of the Devwi-Ich. Only those Kaltorans that fled to the ocean world of Kadash survived.
- **Legion:** Became increasingly dependent on skirmish tactics as their supplies and numbers diminished.
- **Mechonids:** Established many factories throughout the Archon's fallen empire (even behind Nephilim lines) and attacked all sentient organic life.
- **Palantor:** Were being consumed and corrupted by the Mechonids within their Palantor Network, forcing some to flee out into the physical reality via a Network Node on Setzer's Comet in Haven (and possibly elsewhere).
- **Remnant (Ursai):** Crushed by the Nephilim's many biological weapons the desperate Ursai activated an ancient Human psionic weapon that was known as the Deatomiser: killing themselves, many Nephilim, releasing psionic nanites out into the galaxy and creating the ghostly Echoes.
- **Zhou:** The biological 'Zhou' weapon was deployed on many battlefields and planets in the final months of the war. Only those Zhou deployed on the planet Praid were fought back.

Years of Darkness

In the years that followed the extinction of the Archons and the departure of the X'ion, the Nephilim, Mechonids and Legion continued to fight with dwindling resources. Eventually, even the Mechonids went dormant as the remaining Nephilim devolved into a non-sentient feral state without their Genocrat leaders. Those that survived the war entered an age that is now known as the Years of Darkness.

- **Corporation (Vargarti):** Their culture was dominated by warlords, nomadic tribes of tech-scavengers and hunters.
- **Kaltorans:** Built underground pit cities beneath the oceans of Kadash, but were driven to cannibalism due to a lack of resources.
- **Legion:** Forced to settle, they chose the arctic planet of Cerberus Prime for its defensible qualities but struggled to adapt their militaristic nature to non-combat enterprises.
- **Mechonids:** Entered a powered-down dormant state.
- **Nephilim:** The Devwi-Ich settled on Eden and entered into a state of hibernation along with most of its resources and elite forces while most other Nephilim slowly turned feral.
- **Palantor:** Gained a reprieve from their conflict with the Mechonids and firmly established themselves on Setzer's Comet.
- **Remnant (Ursai):** Resurected by the god-like All-Being on Kumba, and renamed from the Ursai to the Remnant.
- **Twi-Far (Twilinger):** Explored deep uncharted space and formed a bond with the alien-like Faren.
- **Zhou:** Gained sentience on the planet Praid, forming a primitive culture for themselves.

Rebirth

The century-long Years of Darkness was broken by the Corporations space colonization of the Alabaster planet in Haven, an event that triggered the re-emergence of the Eden Brood Nephilim, Mechonids, Kaltorans and Legion back into space, and the arrival of Palantor, Remnant, Twi-Far and Zhou refugees.

- **Corporation (Vargarti):** Unified behind capitalistic philosophies and moved most of their people to Haven.
- **Kaltorans:** Stabilized themselves with the use of nuclear reactors and hydroponic farms. Had many conflicts with the Corporation during their first years back into space.
- **Legion:** Long-range scouts discovered activity in Haven and they formed a strong economic bond with the Corporation.
- **Mechonids:** Awoke due to the activity in Haven.
- **Nephilim:** The Devwi-Ich emerged to unify the Nephilim on Eden and allied with the Corporation.
- **Palantor:** Under renewed threat by the Mechonids they were forced to come out of hiding to seek aid.
- **Remnant (Ursai):** Driven off Kumba by the Echoes and the withdrawal of the All-Being's protection.
- **Twi-Far (Twilinger):** Forced back to Archon space and Haven by a monstrous Oni Nephilim strain.
- **Zhou:** Discovered by the Twi-Far who keep Praid's location a secret and slowly move some of them to Haven.

Ley Lines & Ley Dust

- » See Humanity and Reality Fracture write-up on pg: 50.
- » See Rule Book pg: 73 for Spacecraft Travel rules.

"Ley Dust flows like water and blows like the wind; pooling around star systems, bubbling out from the Ley Lines, swirling into storms, and crystalizing into deadly shards.

Our great ships of metal, energized shields and advanced navigational arrays are little more than wooden dinghies with sails of cloth to such forces. The Dust is the water that we bob upon, and the wind that propels us forward. An enigmatic substance that is harnessed by ancient technologies that not even the Archons or the X'ion understood."

– Job Filch,
astronavigator.

Ley Dust is an invisible and intangible substance that flows from the Ley Line cracks that stretch across all explored space. It is both the fuel and the path that allows Jump travel between and within star systems, and the use of psionic powers.

Designer Notes:

Space travel in science fiction settings can occasionally feel a little dry as PCs can teleport around to new locations, bypassing all interesting events and locations that they would have come upon between their start and end points.

We hope that the Fragged lore and rules give GMs a wide range of narrative tools to guide and interrupt space travel by having the PCs follow Ley Dust flows in a way that is a little like following the wind or a winding river; with currents, storms, voids, etc... Travel can also be interrupted by SOS signals, pirates and more.

Ley Dust can feel a little like a magical resource that can allow anything to happen, but this IS NOT how it should be treated. Despite Fragged's many fantastical ideas it is a setting that grounds itself in logic. Ley Dust is just there to justify a few fun technologies that are impossible based on our current understanding of scientific laws (ie: FTL travel).

Ley Dust should only affect the following areas:

- » Minds, Time and Jump Travel.

- » Travel within a star system is no faster with Jump travel (unless between two Jump Gates), but is required to travel the vast distances between stars.
- » Ley Dust powered deep space communication systems that work between stars do exist, but they're rare, expensive, dangerous (as they may attract Mechonids) and only suitable for small amounts of data (ie: SOS beacons). Most data must be hauled between stars via spacecraft in physical hard drives.

The example environmental effects listed here are intended to inspire GMs and we encourage you to create more.

Flow

Ley Dust flows out of the Ley Lines and falls into a pattern that flows parallel to the galactic core, gathering around gravitation fields such as stars and planets. Ley Dust has a preemptive elastic-like flow, altering its shape both before and after interaction with an affecting source.

Between star systems Ley Dust flows in river-like currents. Navigators plot paths along these streams to accelerate their travels, or move along thin and winding streams to bypass unwanted attention from pirates and other forces that may interrupt their journey.

Storms & Crystallization

While no one understands how spontaneous Ley Storms come about, they can be anticipated by a skilled navigator who is maintaining a watchful eye on the elastic flow of the Ley Dust. Ley Storms are particularly dangerous as they can create large chunks of crystalized Ley Dust that may damage Jump Drives and cause time and/or mental distortions.

Example Effects:

- » Flick forward or backwards through time.
- » Visions of the past, future, or other people's minds.
- » Uncontrollable telepathy.
- » Spacecraft is ripped apart as different sections are moved through time at different rates.

Crossing a Ley Line

Ley Dust is densest along a Ley Line, and may be used by a daring spacecraft to travel at speeds that may exceed a Jump Gate. But they are incredicly dangerous, as crossing one of these invisible lines can cause devistating amounts of mental and/or time disruption.

Wormholes

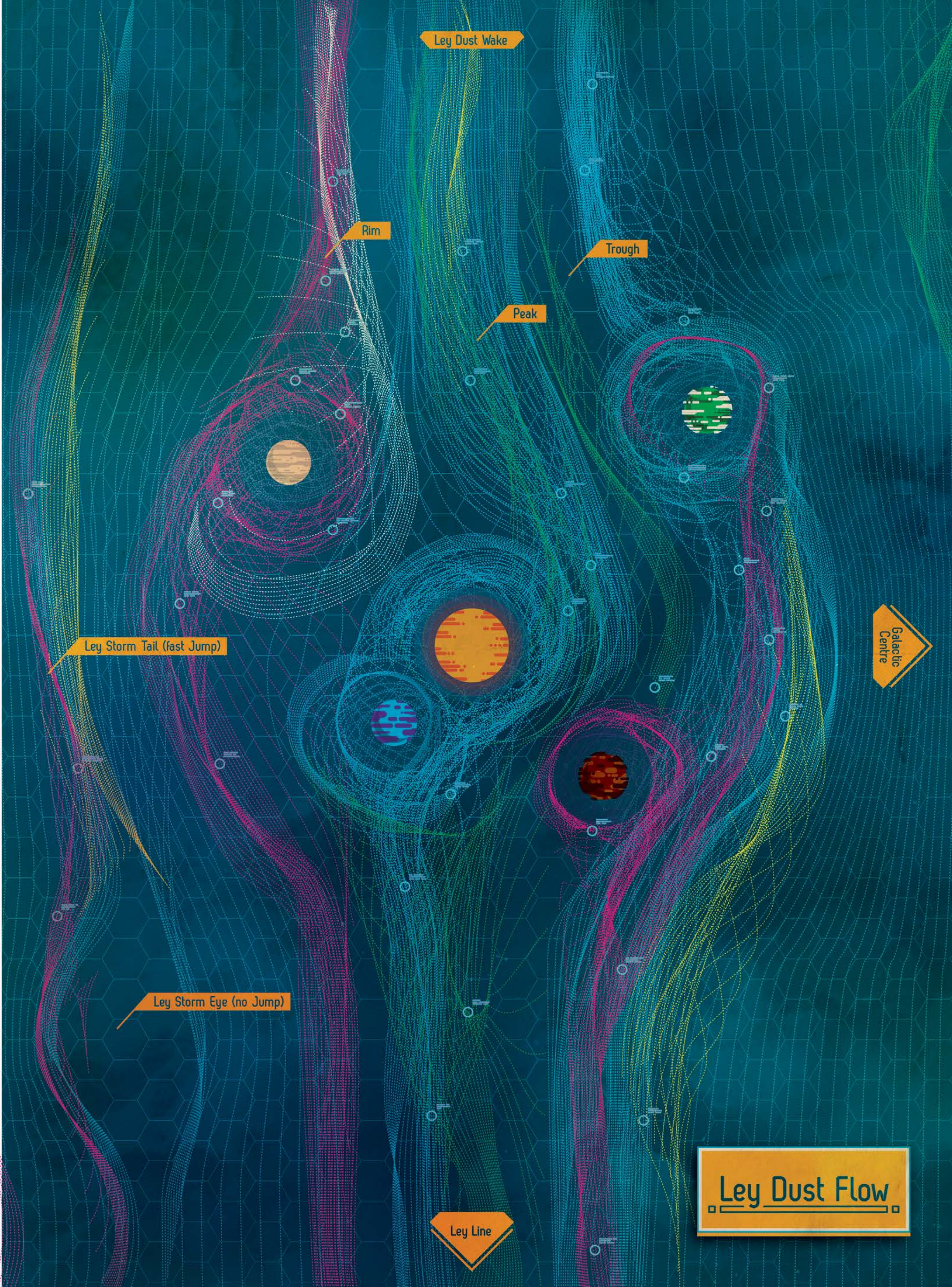
- » See Titan's Maw write-up on pg: 192.

Storage

Ley Dust may not be stored for large amounts of time and is commonly gathered just before the point of use by a spacecraft's Jump Drive. Ley Dust may be stored in specalized canisters (see Rule Book pg: 194) for a week, and is a commonly done by those who are planning to travel into an area that is devoid of Ley Dust to allow their escape, such as the Kasuf system (pg: 200).

New Worlds

Ley Lines and Dust are slowly spreading out to new star systems that no one has ever been able to reach before, with some being terraformed by automated Human-made Titanic robots. Those wishing to explore these uncharted worlds will need to bring canisters of temporarily stored Ley Dust, as Ley Dust flows at the very edge of accessible space can be sparse.


Ley Dust Wake
Rim
Trough
Peak
Ley Storm Tail (fast Jump)
Galactic Centre
Ley Storm Eye (no Jump)
Ley Dust Flow
Ley Line

STAR FINDER
BC-07
BS Carnane

Jump Drives & Space Travel

Invented by early Humans during their Golden Age, these mysterious devices are able to gather together Ley Dust to create portals that allow for faster than light travel. Most commonly found in the occasional spacecraft, but also in large star system-linking Jump Gates and arcane Mechonid technologies.

To perform its key function a Jump Drive gathers together large quantities of Ley Dust to be woven together into a bubble that is then pierced to create a portal into (presumably) the edge of a parallel dimension. This allows the entrant to travel through a wormhole-like tunnel that it is held together by the Jump Drive and Ley Dust.

Production

Most Jump Drives are built from salvaged pre-Great War spacecraft, but with some being manufactured by the Corporation, Nephilim and Palantor. Humans had lost the ability to manufacture Jump Drives during their final Age of Gnawing, but what was known was passed onto the Archons who were eventually able to reverse engineer the technology to a point where they could produce their own Drives and orbital Jump Gates.

The Speaker

Multiple elements of a Jump Drive have not been understood for thousands of years, but the most vital component that remains a mystery is its ability to compute the unfathomable amount of data that is required to shift Ley Dust around in such a way that will result in a stable wormhole.

It is a little known truth that a Jump Drive's computations are not performed by the Drive at all, rather a Jump Drive is primarily a device that is able to move nearby Ley Dust and receive data from an unknown source - that scientist call The Speaker - that performs the required computations.

There are many theories about what the Speaker may be, some suspect it to be a kind of ancient Human super-computer, or possibly a kind of lighthouse that permanently sits within Jump Space. Others of a more spiritual nature have also posited that it could be the All-Being.

Jump Gates

Before the Great War the Archon empire was crisscrossed by a network of Jump Gates that allowed for faster travel between systems. This network was largely destroyed by the Nephilim, but in recent years some work has been made to reverse this around Haven. The Eden Brood Nephilim have established the Kasuf-Haven gate, the Palantor have built the Var-Haven gate and the Kaltorans are busily working on their own Gate that sits in orbit of the planet Mishpacha.

Jump Gates may only be built at key points (which only the Palantor currently understand) and require a huge amount of effort to link. Once two gates are linked they are rarely re-linked to a new gate, and may be activated to create an efficient access point to Jump Space that any ship (even without a Jump Drive) may enter.

Communication

Before the Fractured Age the Archon empire was a sea of data streams and relay stations, all working together to maintain their complex and vast domain. Now, the universe is a dark and quiet place where only the desperate and foolish dare to send signals out across open space, only the wealthy can afford access to the few rare satellites, and colonies must physically haul data between the stars. Cities are still replete with digital connections, but a simple mountain range can isolate them from their neighbours.

Satellites

- Satellites are rare as they're easy targets for scavengers.
  - Most colonies make use of nearby relay stations on buildings and natural elevated points.
  - Many larger colonies use temporary low-orbit satellites that are only active for short periods.
  - Planets under firm military control will have satellites.
- Space stations and spacecraft can act as satellites, but they will only do so for specific users.
- Without a satellite land-based communication range is greatly limited by physical barriers (ie: mountains and the curve of a planet).

Long-Distance Communication

- You must know the location of your recipient.
  - With millions of people within the Haven system, very few pay attention to non-direct signals.
- If you or your contact are on a planet, the planet must be facing the correct way.
- Long-distance communication (ie: between planets) will be typically delayed by 5 minutes per day of travel time.
  - Making real-time voice or video communication impossible.
- Long-distance communication has a very high probability of being intercepted (ie: by pirates, Corp data sifters, slumbering Mechonids, etc...).
  - Those intercepting your data can use it to gather information on the equipment that sent it and your location.
- Long-range communication is rarely used outside of an emergency, or by deep space exploration teams in systems without inhabitants.

Inter-System Communication

- Data is typically physically hauled between star systems (pg: 75).
- Deep Space Comm systems do exist, but they're expensive and rare (see Rule Book pg: 183 and 193).
- SOS beacons (pg: 190) use a cut-down Deep Space Comm technology.
  - Pirates and Mechonids make regular use of fake SOS beacons to lure in prey.

The Stream

- The Stream is Fragged's version of the internet.

Phones

- Most non-impoverished people will have basic phones.

Species

Kashyrrk was awakening.

That was not part of the plan.

This was inconvenient for Bryash, since she was currently making her way through the creature's gullet. She cursed her bad luck, her poor choices in life, her maker, her scientific curiosity, and whichever Corp knockoff brand had made her boots; they were not appropriate for cave spelunking, especially when the cave in question was actually Nephilim the size of a star cruiser.

The floor made a wet squelching sound as the Nephilim Emissary tiptoed towards the light, egg clutched under her arm. It was smooth, crimson red and pulsing with a soft glow, same as all the others scattered around the cave. Bryash gazed longingly at the egg stash: a treasure trove of rare genetic material, if only they weren't so damn huge.

Something brushed her leg, and she leapt back with a hiss. A tendril had burst from a nearby egg, caressing the air with smooth motion. Bryash allowed herself to relax, lowering her knife, but a sharp pain lanced through her leg. The tendril had left an acidic burn, and as she watched, another cracked the shell of the offending egg.

Then, another. And another, rippling outwards from where she stood. She'd been wrong: the great Kashyrrk had not noticed her detaching one of its eggs. It was excited that her babies were hatching.

Now Bryash cursed the universe itself, taking off at a sprint, using her knife to slice at the rapidly hatching egg tendrils as she ran.

Next time, Bryash decided, if she managed to escape from here alive she was buying illegal genetic material on the black market, like any self-respecting scientist. Footwork was for soldiers.

Corporation (Vargarti)

- **Creator:** Archons (unknown faction).
- **Species:** Vargarti.
- **Average Height:** 1.7m
- **Average Life Span:** 78 (82 natural) years.
- **Population:** 72 million.
- **Principle Settlements:**
  - Alabaster and Mishpacha (Haven), Orotalt moon: Jamila (Kasuf), Varsphere (VAR-2205).
- **Government:** Plutocratic oligarchy (Board of Management).
- **Primary Exports:** Culture, fuel, robotics (Legion, Palantor), small goods (Legion), transportation.
- **Primary Imports:** Enforcement (Legion), FLESH drones (Nephilim), food and raw minerals (Kaltoran), scientific data (Nephilim, Palantor), star charts (Twi-Far).

- **Common Allies:** Eden Brood Nephilim, Legion.
- **Common Rivals:** Kaltorans, Remnant.

"Capitalism is the only system in history where wealth was not acquired by looting, but by production, not by force, but by trade, the only system that stood for a person's right to their own mind, to their work, to their life, to their happiness, to themself."

– Ancient Human philosophy.

Rejected by their Archon creators as a failure, the Vargarti were forced to live on a single island on the Ursai controlled desert world of Varsphere in the VAR-2205 system (commonly known as Var). They were not allowed to travel, bound by strict population control, and were unable to contribute to wider society or to build their own. They simply existed, a nothing species that were overlooked by all for over a millennium.

During the Great X'ion War, the Nephilim rained down death and destruction upon the Ursai worlds, including Varsphere. As Var was a minor system of insignificant value, few Nephilim forces were assigned to its destruction, choosing instead to rely upon orbital bombardments and biological warfare. Powerful genetically engineered viruses were deployed to target the Ursai, but not the Vargarti, who were once again overlooked.

By the end of the war Varsphere was a toxic wasteland with all of its cities obliterated, all Ursai dead, peppered with roaming Feral Nephilim and its ecosystem in a state of collapse... but many Vargarti had survived.

Conditioned to be dependent on their Ursai keepers and uneducated beyond a basic level, the collapse of the Vargarti was inevitable. A million died from starvation and violence in those first few years, but a new society did arise. Nomadic tribes spread across their continent, fighting other Vargartians and Nephilim beasts to seize control of precious resources. Those tribes that survived were the ones that picked their fights well, optimised their supplies and who were able to make use of scavenged technology.

For the Vargarti these Years of Darkness were a chance to reimagine themselves and to discard the inferior status given to them by the Archons. This reimagining began in earnest when a Vargarti warlord named Vix the 'Smiling Slayer' gained control of a remote Ursai outpost that sat alongside a great acidic lake in the centre of their continent.

Vix quickly learned that this outpost was a research centre where the Ursai and their Archon masters from the Unending faction had been studying an ancient Human city that was buried deep below the sand. Much of the valuable Human-era artefacts had long been removed, but what captured Vix's attention were the translated historical records. This city rose during the Golden Age of Humanity only a few hundred years after the formation of the Ley Lines and was only abandoned by the Humans for a richer planet.

The Humans talked optimistically of their lives and the prosperity that they had enjoyed due to a social structure known as capitalism. Vix embraced this ideology as a means to forge a new path for his people, one where a person would be judged as an individual and not according to the nature of their birth.

Armed with a powerful unifying message and access to new Human-age technologies (such as Synth Steel, robotics and more), it did not take long for many warlords to unite under Vix's banner.

Within just four decades of this transformation, and the discovery of multiple buried Human cities, the Vargarti had taken to the stars. First travelling to the nearby Nhare system, where they learned of the incredibly valuable gas-giant Makor (which they would later rename to Alabaster) in the former Kaltoran capital system of Haven.

The 10 greatest warlords of Varsphere understood the prize that they had found; an endless supply of fusion fuel and the raw materials needed to create Synth Steel. They consolidated their tribes into the first private company The Corporation, founded on the principles of capitalism and codified by the first Board of Management. It is at this time that the Vargartians discarded their racial identity and became the Corporation, a purely capitalistic society.

What followed was a great exodus from Var to Haven where they colonised Alabaster en mass with great space stations. This time of space colonisation was extremely difficult and took the lives of a hundred thousand Corporates (including Vix). The Corporation would have failed if not for the Eden Brood Nephilim. In a never to be repeated gift of generosity the newly awakened Devwi-Ich Archgenocrat housed the Corporation in its mighty warships and provided food, supplies, and workers, which would eventually be replaced by organic FLESH robots.

Over the years that followed the Corporation gained the attention from the yet-to-emerge Kaltorans, the nearby Legion, the hidden Palantor and the dormant Mechonids. They also built the Haven-Var Jump Gate with the help of the Palantor. The Corporation had inadvertently awoken Haven and ushered in a new age.

The Corporation are the greatest unifying social force within the Haven system, a fact that they don't mind mentioning to the other species. This is not for any idealistic reasons, but due to the Corporation's very nature and its constant thirst for economic growth.

In their eagerness to cross cultural boundaries Corporate culture has almost no specism (except in regard to the Ursai/Remnant). They have a talent for social cohesion and a passion for order, risk mitigation, and economic growth. As a result, they have established many cross-species systems, most notably the broad use of Credit Chips and the wide-spread use of their language.

◆◆◆

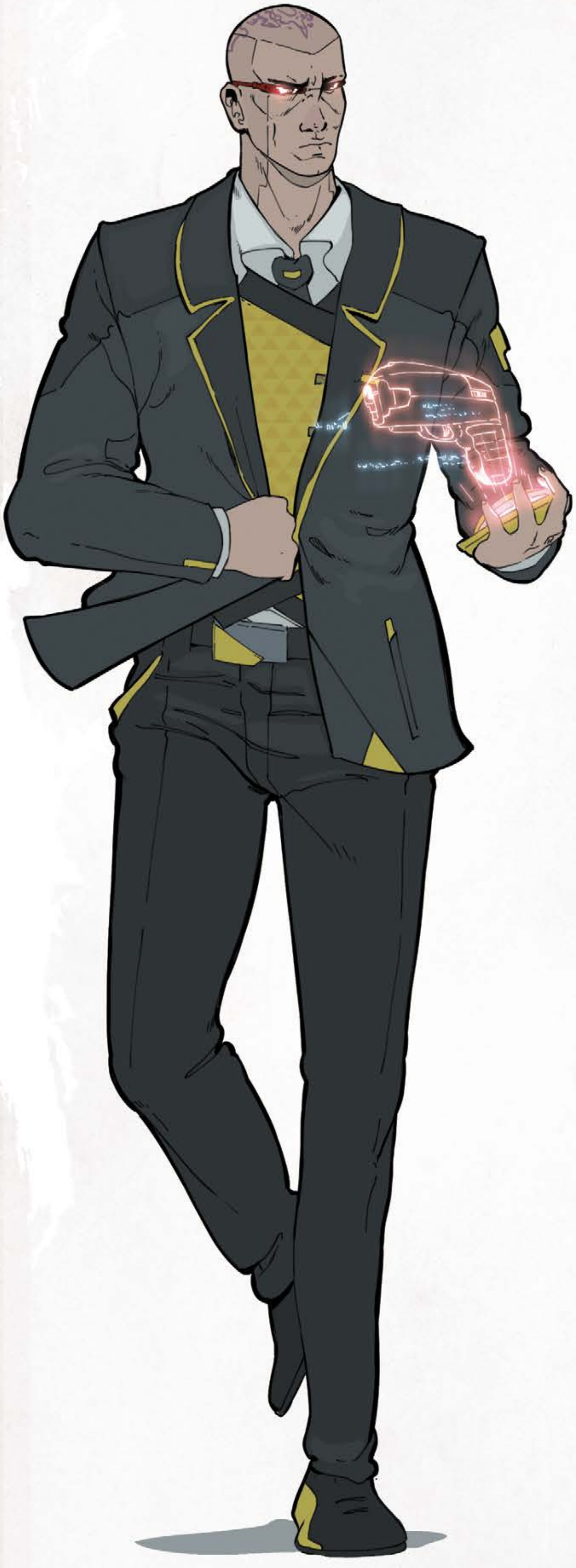
Over the years the hierarchies of both the Eden Brood Nephilim and The Corporation have solidified their working relationship in the form of a trade pact. In exchange for FLESH robots and R&D the Corporation provide the Nephilim with near-unlimited fuel, access to economic markets, and many of their spheres of cultural and political influence.

To the deep frustration of the Corporation, relationships did not form so well with the Kaltorans as they emerged from their subterranean aquatic pit cities on Kadash. The first Kaltorans clashed bitterly with the Corporation and their Nephilim allies. Pirating their trade routes, disregarding legal agreements as they saw fit and preferring to use barter-based systems over Corporate credits.

Things did calm down as trade for Kaltoran food and raw minerals grew, and Corporate negotiators learned how Kaltorans valued trust and respect over pragmatism and rules. The Corporations introduction of Legion mercenary guard forces should also not be discounted, as the Kaltorans had a kinship and respect for their old straight-talking wartime allies.

Both desiring order and structure and having complementary skills sets, the Corporation and Legion have a natural synergy despite their glaring cultural differences. Most Corporates abhor personal physical risk, while the Legion relish it. Most Legion hate the monotony of economics and production, while Corporates thrive on it. Officially sanctioned Legion Auxilia and unsanctioned Exilia mercenaries are a familiar sight in almost all Corp spaces. With each passing year the Legion grow increasingly intertwined with the Corporation.

With relative peace between these four species it was far easier to absorb newcomers into Haven, especially the technologically advanced trans-Human Palantor whom the Corporation are overly eager to trade with. The arrival of the Ursai (now named Remnant) has caused the Corporation many social pains as their claims of a meritocratic culture devoid of specism are put to the test. Not only are the Remnant a living reminder of their ancient history, but the Remnant are also the recipients of seemingly unmerited 'divine' grace and are exerting an increasingly large amount of cultural and political influence over Haven.



Suits

- **Common Motivations:** Economic power, social status.
- **Common Characteristics:**
  - Abrasive, decisive, entrepreneurial, organised, pragmatic.
- **Common Names:**
  - Aaron (m), Blake, Isabel (f), Jordan, Milo (m), Octavia (f), Rita (f), Stephanie (f). Edward (m), Stephen (m), Tatiana (f).
- **Common Surnames:**
  - Ark, Body, Cheer, Dray, Drazco, Endocorp, Synth, Tri-Star.
- **Population:** 65.93% of Corp.

- **Common Traits:**
  - Looking Good (Wealth), Charming (Persuasion), Overlooked (Stealth), Latest Tech (Computers), Cautious Shot (Tactical).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Ion/Particle Gun, Companion. Haze/Force Field Tactical Suit, Ablative Assault Suit, Auto Locker, Absorption Shield, Wealth/Computers Toolbox.

"A Suit's suit is a symbol of their social circle and status. A declaration to all who are in the know that they have 'made it'; that they have invested in 'making it for this season's fashion'... or for last season. That they have never 'made it', but are still respectable, or that you are not in their circle because you do not 'get it'.

They're a complex ever-shifting tapestry of collars, lapels, buttons, vests, cuts, folds, materials and hues. A simple blend of Synthweave that keeps one comfortable and adorned with complex shield nodes that can deflect a rail gun. Every suit is a reflection of the wearer and the craftsman."

– Leroy Octanto,
elite Corporate tailor.

The undeniable hegemonic culture that dominates the Corporation are the Suits. So-named due to their propensity to own at least one good suit for social occasions, even if they are very poor.

Largely driven by a desire for personal success, the Suits are a highly motivated people with a strong sense of self-determination who believe they are proving their Archon creators wrong when they deemed the Vargarti an inferior species. For the Corp, the Great X'ion War is celebrated as a liberating event that freed them from an existence of irrelevance, and capitalism is adored for granting each person the opportunity to thrive or fail based on their own merits and not their genes.

Corporate culture is deceptively simple to outsiders. While most are materially well provided for, nearly all Corporates present an image of greater personal success than they have actually achieved. This is especially true for Suits when interacting with other Corporates where you are judged on perceptions of your achievements and in many cases hired and fired on that same basis.

The sickly, disabled and elderly are euthanized or driven out of Corporate society if they are unable to contribute or have adequate poverty insurance (occasionally paid for by a generous friend or family member, or from a previous prosperous life). Those in the lower economic classes (or who are particularly thrifty) live in pod-like units that are commonly rented out in a time-share structure to multiple people according to their work shifts. While the wealthiest Suits live in opulent mansions and frequently throw extravagant parties to firmly establish public knowledge of their success.

Suits primarily live on one of the six large and crowded Synth Steel space stations that orbit the gas giant Alabaster in Haven. These space stations have large central chambers that are filled with garish advertisements, shops and towering buildings. While many also live in Mishpachan colony cities or well-established towns. Wherever they make their homes, you can be sure that there is an important source of income close by.

It's all Business

The Corporation is first and foremost a business, run by the Board of Management. Since its beginnings on Varsphere it has since established many subsidiaries, some founded, others acquired. Each belongs to a company, either the Corporation itself or a large company which itself is a subsidiary of the Corporation. Subsidiaries are encouraged to compete to improve efficiency and profit, so that only the best may succeed while the least profitable fail.

Despite this appearance of free competition, the Corporation is a cartel and while subsidiaries are free to compete, political and business competitors from outside the Corporation are subjected to cartel-like tactics to ensure the continuation of their monopolies. It is common for the Board of Management to temporarily suspend subsidiary competition to control supply, fix prices and undercut competitors until their monopoly is restored.

There is no national identity or citizens of the Corporation, only employees. But anyone employed by the Corporation, no matter their species, is seen as one of them, a 'Corp.' The greatest fear of many Vargarti employees is that they could be sacked, and in being sacked they are no longer a 'Corp' but just a Vargarti once again, a person of irrelevance who is doomed to poverty.

Credits, Cards & Fuel

The Archon empire made use of complex management systems that distributed resources according to needs, from entire nations right down to the individual. These systems were based on Human-made algorithms that were in use by those that created the Archons in the last years of Humanity. They were designed to be self-adjusting and to funnel all excess resources to the Archons. With the click of a few buttons an Archon could adjust the resource production and distribution systems of an entire nation to provide what they desired.

There was never a desire to try alternative forms of resource management because these systems were very effective at achieving their intended goals: stability and Archon power. The discovery of an alternative economic system from the near-deified Human species was just what the Vargartians craved. Not just because it was 'not Archon' but also because they saw it as the system that had raised Humanity to an unrivalled height.

While the Archon economic systems were fixated on output, the Corporation systems are designed to assign a value to everything and put it to work… from raw materials, products, time, potential and so much more. The calculations for this vast and complex economy are managed by large stock market supercomputers on the spacestations around Alabaster.

Each bank of the Corporation may issue its own currency, created by making loans. This has proven to be a helpful safeguard: if a prominent bank goes bankrupt, it only collapses the part of the economy that was tied to its brand of currency rather than the whole. Pinnacle Finance is the only company that issues a physical currency, known as **Credit Chips**, used for many small and inter-species transactions. The value of a Credit Chip is fixed to the value of fuel, the main investment of Pinnacle Finance (a subsidiary of Pinnacle Fuel). There is always a demand for energy and thus there is always a demand for Credit Chips.

Credit Chips are small 5mm silver cubes that can clip together or become larger Sticks (10cr), Blocks (100cr) or Bricks (10,000cr). Credit Chips are not simple minted coins. Each chip is a tiny computer that constantly buys and sells shares while they are within Corporate space to maintain a stable value.

» 1 Money Trade Box equals roughly 5 Blocks of Credits.

The Corporation has proven itself to be amazingly effective at utilizing the vast and myriad resources of its people. Shuffling huge quantities of wealth into the control of its most talented, effective and entrepreneurial companies… but also towards its most heartless and greedy CEOs, and away from its most vulnerable and needy.

But despite all of its many flaws, the Corporation's capitalistic systems have proven so pervasive that they have been adopted in some form by all of the other species. Others may have their own currencies and Kaltoran merchants may openly and loudly refuse Corp Credits while others are watching… but everyone knows that the Corporation's ways will dominate the future of all commerce.

Language: Corp

The most widely used of all languages within the sector, Corp is comparatively easy to learn, with short words and a limited vocabulary. It has distanced itself from its original Ursai form by taking on a melting-pot approach to vocabulary and a simplified grammatical structure. This makes it a terrible (but often used) Corporate legal language, as even a moderately skilled lawyer can bend the meaning of contracts and other legal agreements.

Many major languages are slowly accumulating words from, and contributing words to, Corp. This is making it an increasingly complicated but broadly accepted language with multiple dialects.

Board of Management (BoM)

The Corporation is a plutocratic oligarchy, which is to say a government run by the heads of its ten wealthiest companies. These ten CEOs are known as the Board of Management. The BoM is responsible for conducting diplomacy with the governing bodies of other species and setting all regulatory laws. Their members are selected each year in an event called the Ranking, and are Seated to set law once every three months (unless an emergency session is called).

The Board of Management was originally an alliance of ten Vargartian warlords that emerged victorious from the many conflicts on Varsphere. These warlords were instrumental in the propagation of the capitalistic enlightenment of their people, the Corporations emergence into space and the colonisation of Haven.

Prominent Megacorps

Despite its many fluctuations, board membership has fallen into a predictable pattern over the last decade. Membership of the lower seats changes constantly as companies fall as quickly as they rise while the upper seats remain almost unchanged.

1) Maxwell Brightstar, Pinnacle Fuel

He may not be the wealthiest Corporate, but as the CEO of the wealthiest company he has occupied the number one seat for seven of the past nine years. Maxwell Brightstar rose to power in dramatic fashion after he publicly revealed that he had orchestrated the murder of his former boss at Pinnacle Fuel and had been secretly running the company for the past six months.

In those months he had raised the stock value of Pinnacle Fuel by a staggering 67% through a brutal trimming of all management positions, as they had become bloated with overpaid sycophants. He had also cut his own wages and sold shares to fund the elimination of those who had dispatched his former boss and to cover his small Regulatory Law fines. All of this had allowed him to raise Pinnacle Fuels BoM seat up to the number one position, supplanting ARK Foundings.

Maxwell is an intense and serious individual who is known for his black on black suits and secret personal life. Little is known of his past, but he was born and raised by Neon Hunter truckers and spent most of his early life in space trains.

2) Keaton Ark, ARK Foundings

ARK Foundings is one of the oldest companies in the Corporation and can trace its roots all the way back to the warlord Vix the 'Smiling Slayer' who first discovered capitalism. ARK made its name through the reproduction of ancient Human-era technologies and the building of three out of the six space stations that orbit Alabaster.

Keaton Ark was a young warlord under Vix back on Varsphere before the great exodus and has all but ran the Corporation for two decades. He is now a bitter old man who feels unappreciated for his deeds and is held together by invasive body augmentations that have given him an unnatural appearance.

Keaton has a special hatred for Maxwell Brightstar who murdered his friend Jane Pinnacle and supplanted ARK's number one position on the BoM. Much of his energy is spent plotting his revenge… to the detriment of his massive company. ARK Foundings is effectively being run by a team of three regional managers, one for each of the primary star systems: Haven, Kasuf and Var. It is only a matter of time before these managers attempt to push their powerful CEO out, which may bring about a Corporate civil war.

4) Conroy "Double Tap" Body,
Body Count Conglomerate

When it comes to corporate espionage, hostile takeovers, high-end security and insurance enforcement, few can rival the Body Count Conglomerate. While they have long been a profitable mercenary company, it is only under the leadership of Conroy Body that they have gained the wealth needed to join the BoM.

The handsome Conroy started out as grunt and quickly found his way into special operations thanks to his sharp mind and digital skills. After a decade of working his way up the corporate ladder, he was voted in as CEO. While Conroy still brands Body Count as a trendy security company, most of their income now comes from arms production and contracting Legion.

5) Blair Trilia, C.U.R.E

C.U.R.E exploded onto the scene just six years ago under the able stewardship of Blair Triliar a young entrepreneur brimming with social magnetism and business acumen.

Since its founding, C.U.R.E has cornered the medical market across the Corporation and is even a common sight in non-Corporate cities. Many credit the companies success to Blair's near prognostic ability to foretell medical disaster and to the company's nimble speed at producing cures to sudden outbreaks of new viruses and other debilitating diseases. C.U.R.E's only true competitors are Nephilim gene weavers and the 'magical' Remnant All-Monks.

6) Edgar Dray, Dray Mining Consortium

Known throughout the sector as the cruellest taskmasters of the Corporation's vast star-spanning holdings, the DMC supplies clients with thousands of tons of mineral ore and for-profit prison services at incredible bargains, always undercutting their competition.

The DMC's many Exo-Stations are dismal processing plants where lengthy shifts and penitentiary-like conditions grind workers' souls to dust. Settling regulatory debts in exchange for indenture work contracts are a staple of his recruitment. In recent years several of these stations proved fertile grounds for resistance movements and paramilitary activities.

This powerful company has humble, and perhaps ironic, roots, grown by a founder whose own life was fraught with the ills of crushing poverty. Edgar Dray came to Haven a pauper, his whole family indentured to a powerful Vargarti organisation. Edgar's father killed himself shortly after his wife became a concubine to a Vargarti warlord, and at eleven years old Edgar became the sole caregiver to his four younger sisters. Edgar struggled, eventually buying his own freedom, but lacked the necessary funds to deliver his sisters from bondage.

Edgar's meteoric rise eventually birthed the DMC, but he was too late to save his sisters from deprivation, abuse and suicide. No one knows if this jagged pill he swallowed in his youth is why he smilingly employs labour practices that ensure thousands of families will share his sisters' fate, or if Edgar is a special breed of sociopath whose quest for profit brooks no interference from paltry sentiment.

7) Krizacklor (Kriz), FLESH Inc.

Kriz stands out as the only non-Vargartian on the BoM. A towering and imposing Nephilim Genocrat with four large tentacles and a hissing voice. Kriz's company FLESH Inc is seen by many as a proxy for the Eden Brood Nephilim. An accusation that Kriz never appears to deny with much conviction. In truth, the Corporation cares very little as long as the Nephilim continue their steady supply of FLESH drone workers, which Kriz is more than happy to provide.

8) Roland Bradford, Bradford Investment

The rotund Roland is a man of contrasts. In his mansion on the space station Alabaster Two he lives a life completely devoid of organic company, surrounded by elegantly custom made robot aids and holographic friends. Which contrasts strongly with his primary role on the BoM as chief inter-species political negotiator.

Roland will go months at a time without any sentient company, but if it were not for him it is quite likely that the Corporation would be in open war with the Kaltorans and paying a much higher rate to hire Auxilia Legion mercenaries.

Bradford Investment is a major banking firm that specializes in entrepreneurial tech financing. The day-to-day investments of the company are managed by automated algorithms, while Roland oversees all large and unique investments (ideally without personal contact with employees or clients).

In recent years rumours abound that Roland has taken a Palantor partner and is developing technology that will allow them to produce a child… what form this child will take is a matter of wild speculation.

9) Bronwyn 'Mother Corp' Castiglione, Cheer Banking

Often referred to as 'Mother Corp' for her instrumental role in forming and popularizing the Raise Policy where companies fund the upbringing and education of Corporate children. A contentious scheme, but one that has no doubt saved the Vargarti species from extinction due to population decline.

Bronwyn has always planned for the future and sees the prosperity of wider Corp culture and herself as intertwined. Her very long view of time and broad considerations may stem in part from the fact that her banking business relies on the success of hundreds of thousands of other companies, and that she has birthed two dozen children over her long life (which has given her some renown in Kaltoran circles).

Bronwyn is an elderly woman who doesn't give a crap what other people think of her. She speaks plainly and will openly mock her opponents and critics to their faces, but she is also a person of great cultural pride who is willing to break taboos and talk of Vargartians as a species.

Bronwyn is a person of great power, but her time as CEO of Cheer Banking is on its final legs. She once held the third BoM seat but now flickers between the lower seats. If Cheer Banking ever drops below ninth place her final allies on her company board will side with her opponents and push her out.

11) Darcy Octanto, Octanto

The fabulously dressed Darcy Octanto is a Socialite and diva to the very core. Constantly surrounded by cameras and beautiful people, his life is one great parade of drama and excitement.

Many dismiss Darcy as a vapid imbecile, but none can deny the power of his brand. Octanto is 'the' premium Corporate fashion company who have a hundred alternative brands under their umbrella, including many entertainment and communication networks.

Darcy gained an eternal ally in Conroy Body after managing the immensely successful rebranding of the Body Count Conglomerate. He has given his services to most members of the BoM at some point in time, giving him the unique gift of having no open BoM enemies.

But despite his great success he rarely occupies a seat on the BoM… usually only seat 10 or 9 for a few months after the successful release of a new season of shielded suits.

12) Jonas Sol, TrueSky Holdings

Through bleeding-edge Nephilim bio-tech, Jonas appears to be a young and confident rising star. But in truth he is one of the oldest members of his species, and his killer instincts in the boardroom are rooted firmly in his genocidal past.

Jonas was a warlord on Varsphere where he exterminated thousands in campaigns of terror against Vix and his allies, before reinventing himself when the Vargarti moved to Haven. After changing his name and appearance, he wielded his potent influence to ensure the eventual rise of his aeronautical company TrueSky to the top of the Corporation's hierarchy and is just now nipping at the lower seats of the BoM.

Many suspect Krizacklor of FLESH Inc to be a Nephilim counter-Corporate agent, but in fact it is most likely Jonas. The Nephilim do not openly offer near-immortality for any price, and would have only given it to Jonas in exchange for something of much higher value.

Regulatory Law

At the inception of the Board of Management, it was decided that agreements between private individuals would suffice for law and order. However, when the Corporation came into contact with the other species the social order began to break down as there was no way to combat mercenary backed hostile takeovers, Kaltoran piracy and other larger threats. To fight these problems the Board of Management decided that a formalised system of regulations would be necessary; they created article 924c, better known as Corporate Regulatory Law.

These laws apply to all Corporate employees and those within the confines of Corporate space, property and claimed territory. There is nothing considered a moral crime, only breaches in regulation which are enforced with fines. Any breach, from murder to shoplifting, can be paid as a fine; if unable to pay, the offender is sold as indentured labour, until their owner pays off their fine using withheld wages.

The fine is determined not by the ethics of the crime, but by the economic cost of the violation. For example, killing a Kaltoran shopper who was going to spend an estimated 100cr and whose death has no other negative consequences is worth a 100cr fine. While harming a prominent CEO and causing a stock value loss of 15% could be worth millions. A person or company may take out insurance to inflate the consequence of causing them damage.

These fines are often left unpaid by non-Corporates. Unpaid fines are applied as "dead or alive" bounties. Legion mercenaries and Corporate security contractors enforce these bounties, receiving a 50% commission, while the remaining 50% is paid to the victim of the breach (minus expenses).

Example Fines (Wealth):

- **Minor:** Skill Roll.
- **Moderate:** 12t to 14t.
- **Major:** 16t to 30t.

Raise Policy & Offspring

As with all non-contributing dependents, the Corporation finds children to be a difficult topic and has struggled to know how to fit them into their society. While some see them as a source of joy, connection and fulfilment, others see them as a luxury commodity that can only be afforded by the wealthy.

Middle-class Corporate treatment of offspring has been largely shaped by Board of Management seat holder Bronwyn Castiglione who invented the Raise Policy. This policy sees companies fund the raising and education of children in exchange for branding their surname, followed by indentured internship from the age of 14 and a share of their income (split with their guardians and educators) up until the age of 24.

While children are seen as a low-risk investment by most parents, educators and sponsors, the occasional prodigy or dunce has given rise to many frowned upon practices. Chief among these are the euthanization or abandonment of unwanted children and fetus gene weaving.

Spacecraft

Due to their extensive efforts at reverse engineering lost and forgotten technologies, Corporate spacecraft require fewer ancient parts to construct. While many components are of lesser quality than their ancient counterparts, they are usually more unified in their construction and appearance as they have been (almost entirely) scratch-built.

From low-cost Synth Steel haulers and opulent luxury vehicles to kilometre long space trains, the Corporation are creating an ever-expanding array of spacecraft for every purpose.

Technology

Scientific and technological developments within the Corporation are primarily handled by R&D departments of large companies, often in partnership with well-paid Nephilim or Palantor experts. To Corporates, there is no purpose to science unless it yields a sellable product, leading them to focus on engineering and applied fields over theoretical and pure research. Most of the time, profiting from scientific endeavours requires cutting corners. This is commonly done in two ways: bypassing ethical considerations and/or reverse engineering pre-War technologies.

Haze Mesh

A common form of shielded clothing that utilizes holographic technology to obscure the wearer from attackers through the displacement of their position.

Advanced forms of this technology were in use during the Great War to completely conceal Archon or Nephilim forces. But by limiting the effect to displacement over full invisibility the Corporation has been able to mass-produce a long line of light protective clothing for a moderate cost.

Deuterium Fuel

One of the primary sources of fuel in the sector is Deuterium, a rare form of hydrogen abundant in the gas giant Alabaster. All reactors are salvaged from ancient ships and most of those are fusion which require Deuterium to run, even Nephilim ships use Deuterium for their bio-fusion reactors,

> "Children are an excellent investment, and despite the protests of Neon Hunters most losers and winners can be identified before their mid-teens. Pinnacle, Body Count, C.U.R.E, Octanto and we at Cheer have all significantly contributed to increase the value of promising youths within the Raise Policy by 6.23% over this past quarter. Even unpromising youths that dropped in value by 2.01% last quarter are now up a staggering 13.4% due to large investments from Dray and TrueSky who have been expanding their unskilled workforces."
>
> – Bethany Cheers,
> growth strategist.

The Corporation are meticulous and vigilant not only to maintain their near monopoly on fuel production within the Haven system, but also, to maintain its high value, not allowing the market to be flooded with surplus resources.

Ion (Weapon)

These weapons use Deuterium as ammunition, the same material used for high-grade Corporate spacecraft fuel. They operate by supercharging (or ionizing) helium-3 inside the chamber and ejecting it a glowing jet of protons. Ion weapons were common during the Great War but have since been optimized by the Corporation for unparalleled reload speed by storing all needed Deuterium within the weapon and simply ejecting thumb-sized heat sinks as required.

Particle (Weapon)

Using a similar technology to Ion weapons, particle weapons use ionised particles as a projectile, but rather than storing and carrying clips of ammunition they draw in surrounding gas from the atmosphere and fire them at extreme speed in a focused beam. These weapons do not work in the void of space where there are too few particles in the environment. However, they require no ammunition and are manufactured on mass.

Shielding

A large variety of technologies can generate a wall of force or energy, collectively referred to as shields. Shields are most commonly found on spacecraft, but also widely used by Corporates for unobtrusive personal protection.

Plasma windows are one of the most common methods of shielding. In this technique, air is trapped into a thin sheet by electro-magnetic confinement. The air is then compressed to create a field of plasma that can deflect matter and absorb highly concentrated energy. If maintained at an extremely high temperature (ie: on a spacecraft) the plasma will incinerate most matter that enters the field.

Synth Steel

The moons surrounding Alabaster are poor in traditional building block minerals such as iron but abundant in carbon. For this reason, and the materials natural advantages for large scale and cheap mass production, Synth Steel is a choice material for the Corporation. Adapted from Human-era technology, Synth Steel and other derived products are made from sophisticated carbon-based polymers, engineered with a specific purpose on the nano scale to form a material with the strength of steel but at a fraction of its weight.

Most forms of Synth Steel are solid and match or exceed the properties of steel, particularly tensile strength and hardness. But there are many derivative products with specialised properties such as Synthweave, used to form protective clothing, Crystal Steel, for transparent windows, and Nanosynth which harbours circuitry and programming to form complex shapes within seconds of release. Such as a small building or even a basic robot.

"Making rent off my fourteen hour shifts is tough, but I'm still so thankful to live in a civilized society. Just two more years of this and I will be able to get off this rock and into a real job."
– Devin Dray,
Corporate Exo-Station miner.

"Argha, they're a difficult and shallow folk. All work and no play… and no family, or real mates, or freedom, or… yea, there's a lot of caveats with those slippery tongued, uptight bastards. But they can be ok once you get to know em."
– Amy Shock,
Kaltoran bartender.

"Ze Corporation iz our gateway to peace and a respite with ze other species. Zay may not dealz with uz, but zey will dealz with ze Corp, who will in turn dealz with us. Zey are a useful ally."
– Domarz-ick,
Nephilim FLESH trader.

"Hmmm, they're a frail and cunning people who use words as weapons. Our alliance is tactically advantages to us both, so I will say no more."
– Ajax Mars,
Legion Auxilia merc.

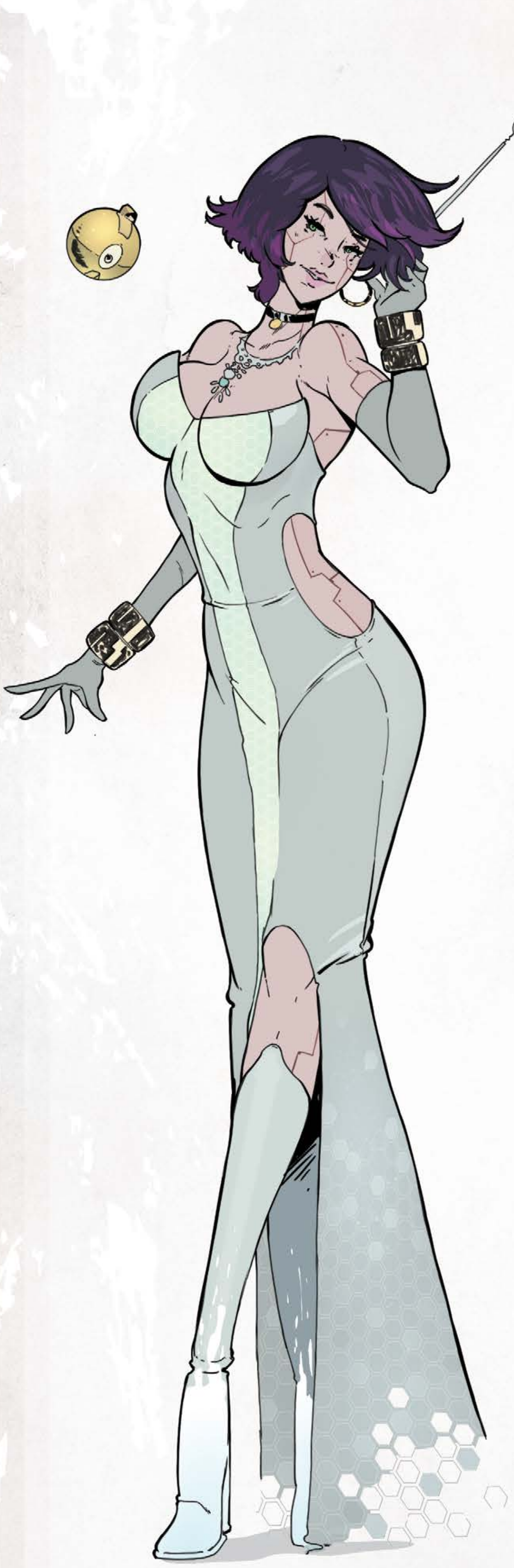
"They are a foolish people to be sure. Toying with technologies they did not earn, and stomping around the galaxy with only a thought for their next step.

Their awakening of the Mechonids has caused us much suffering, but there is nothing to be gained by requiring them to repent of their ignorance. We need them to win our war, and we must maximize our gains from their overt eagerness for our technology and acceptance."
– Emi_087,
Palantor cyberware technician.

"The Corporation and the All-Being are in a war for the souls of Haven. They may think they are fighting battles in the fields of trade, industry and culture. But with every act of cruelty they make our acts of kindness all the more meaningful, and with every discarded outcast they increase the size of our flocks."
– Nyasha Moyo,
Remnant All-Monk.

"Oh, thank the Faren for the Corporation, they make life in space so much easier. Their aesthetic tastes may be garish and overt, but at least they're trying."
– Ethelinda Nebula,
Twi-Far Salamander Symphony mechanic.

"They don't care for us Zhou as we have nothing they value. We travel separate paths."
– Zelique,
Zhou pathfinder.



Socialites

- **Common Motivations:** Economic power, social status.
- **Common Characteristics:**
  - Dramatic, entrepreneurial, fun, narcissistic, organised.
- **Common Names:** Same as Suits, see pg: 66.
- **Common Surnames:**
  - Bailey, Chester, Goldsworth, Jefferson, Livingstone, Octan.
- **Population:** 1.52% of Corp.

- **Common Traits:**
  - Mover & Shaker (Influence), Eye Candy (Strength), Looking Good (Wealth), Performer (Persuasion), Classy (Culture).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Draw Attention/Combat Smarts Arcane, Companion, Haze Mesh/Obfuscation Field Tactical Suit, Hawk Bot, Holo Circlet, Wealth/Culture Toolbox.

"Wow, what a great vid! That part with the crazy Nephilim monster was out of this world! And I sure hope our two Legion buddies, Ajax and Stones, enjoy their R&R in the med bay.

To take us out, here are some clips from next weeks show where we make it onto the ghost ship's bridge! Love you all, and don't forget to like, share and subscribe!"

– Jane 'Mad Gal' Jefferson,
Exploration of the Ghost Ship Leviathon part 6.

Many Corporates have an image in their mind of the heroic entrepreneur. A great person who created something from nothing, or who redefined their field by doing what others were unwilling to do. A paragon of hardworking skill, insight, talent and courage that is entirely worthy of praise. Corp history is replete with such people, and they are held up as the embodiment of capitalistic virtue, and occupy a unique place of prominence in Corp culture.

So strong is the allure of this character trait that many Corps see themselves as a budding entrepreneur, a person who at any moment could come out with the next big thing. But while Corp history was shaped by entrepreneurs who created products and built grand space station, this next digitally-addicted generation looks to be shaped by those who have made themselves into the product.

Some project an image of wealth and beauty, spending their time live-streaming an aspirational lifestyle with a big house, high-tech toys and incredibly attractive and fun friends. Others edit together recordings of their daring exploits into the vast unknowns of space where they battle feral Nephilim and explore ancient ruins. While many more supplement their meagre income and social status with video blogs on niche topics, politics, economic news and pop-drama. Few may find success in these spheres, but their effects on Corp culture are significant.

These so-called Socialites convey an image of raw authenticity as they delve into the carefully curated happenings of their lives. Each presentation – both on the digital Stream and in real life –

meticulously sculpted through video and real-time holographic editing, hired crowds, staged dramas, rented props, paid-for product placements and powerful Human-era hacking technologies. The wealthier and more influential the Socialite (and/or the company funding them) the more elaborate and advanced their techniques.

Communication & the Stream

The Corporation abounds with digital networks, woven together by quantum entanglement cables, radio waves and inter-star system data haulers. The most-used communal network is known as the Stream, a vast array of interconnected servers that make use of a standardized set of Corp Code protocols and structures to disseminate information through Stream Sites and messaging systems. It is in these digital spaces that the Socialites reign supreme.

The Palantor, hacker groups, and Corp marketing teams may define the shape of these spaces, but it is the Socialites who give the Stream its attractive islands of community. Many Stream Sites exist purely to host Socialite videos and articles, with a mixture of free and paywalled services.

There were early experimentations with social Stream Sites that allowed users to upload their personal data, document the best portions of their lives, link up with friends, and form community interest groups. But these sites became unpopular as they were a hive of social toxicity, Corporate manipulation, and data harvesting. Things came to a head when the Galactic Jesters (a pirate hacker faction) revealed to everyone that Bradford Investment was selling AI software to Socialites. These AI programs were designed to keep their communities addicted through fake social interactions, pretending to be people's friends and liking what they had to say. It is estimated that at least 40% of all interactions during this brief period of the Stream were fake.

Advertisers & Social Influencers

Those who are naturally gifted with numbers, science, product development, and running large companies often struggle to create effective advertisements that connect with people. Most go for quantity over quality, bombarding entire physical spaces with images of their products and services. It was the prominent Darcy Octanto, who first recognized the power of the Socialites to convey messages in a textured and authentic way that was far more effective than the standard fake and cheap methods of most Corp businesses.

Darcy has a gifted eye for talented and underappreciated Socialites and has signed contracts with thousands of (formally) no-name presenters in all walks of life. Octanto products can be found in grungy Neon Hunter exploration vids, classy Suit restaurant critic blogs, formal News shows, and niche science articles. The one thing that all of Octanto's Socialite presenters have in common is that every one of them advocates for the supremacy of Corp culture and the Corp dream that anyone can make it. Socialites may not be the wealthiest Corps, but the BoM understands that they have been incredibly effective at managing the Corporations public image.

Technology

Socialites have a nack for utilizing technologies in unexpected and unique ways. These technologies commonly start out in R&D labs and Human ruins, before being mixed with manipulative techniques that allow them to shape social perceptions. Socialites have been so successful in this area that the Body Count Conglomorate's paramilitary R&D department now routinely hires talented Socialites to develop their infiltration technologies.

Holograms

This form of 3D visual display has seen wide use across the galaxy from the early days of Humanity. While most commonly used as an alternative to basic digital screens and buttons, more complex forms have found industrial and military applications. Such as solid-holo that mix holographic and shield technologies to create temporary physical objects.

These systems can be as basic as a wall or mechanical tool, or as complex as a chameleon combat outfit that can make a person invisible. Holographic technologies are rare among the Kaltorans, but are common among the Corp, Nephilim and Palantor.

But some have been known to use holographic technologies in particularly creative ways. Such as editing reality in real-time by using multiple holographic lenses and complex editing software that can work 'almost' faster than a person can see, clothes that can change their appearance and shape with the touch of a button, or more wholistic and intuitive connections to VR or remote-control systems.

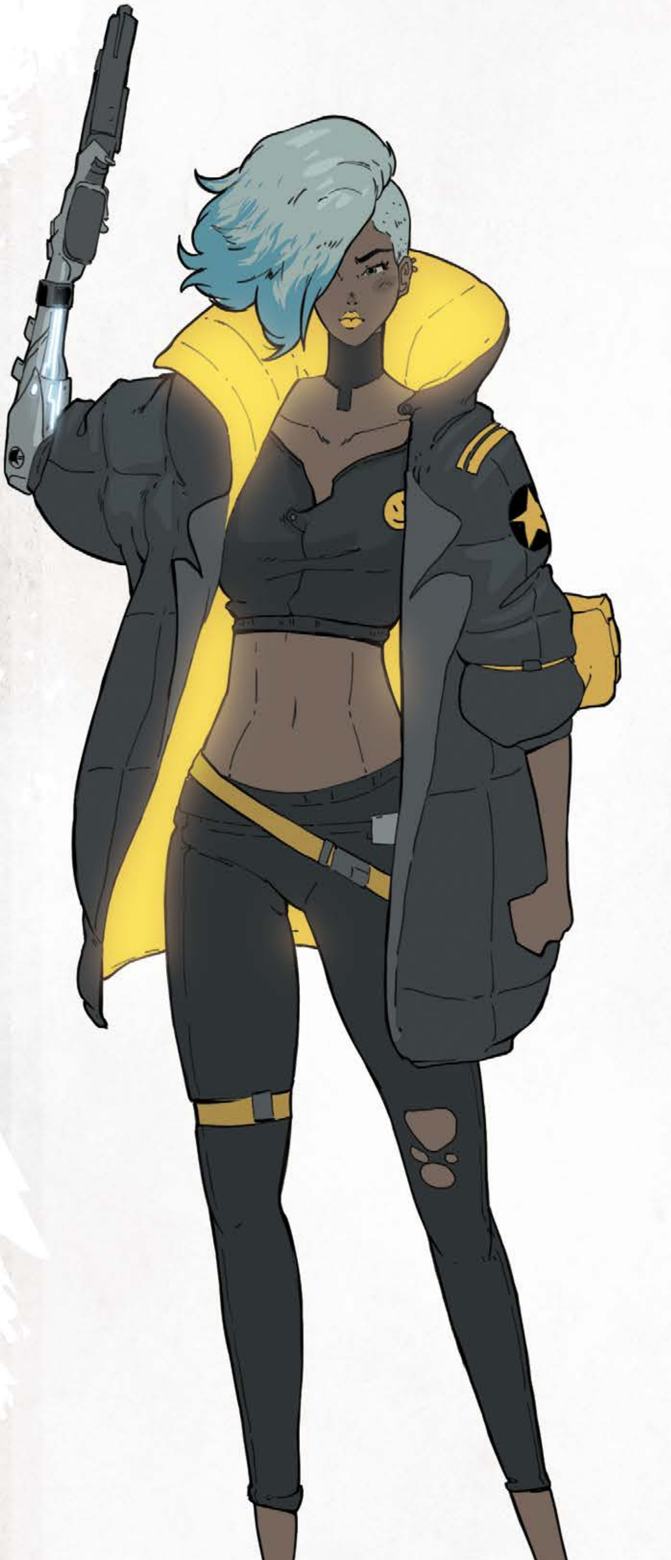
Macro Data

The days of the social Stream Sites may have been short-lived, but lessons were learned about the power of having huge amounts of data on people's activities. When combined with petabytes of economic data, a large corporation or cunning Socialite can use complex algorithms to anticipate (and guide) people's actions.

The large megacorporations may have access to the most data and the most advanced algorithms, but the Socialites have a keen instinctual understanding of how people work.

Shimmer Web

Based off Human technology that was discovered on Varsphere, this data delivery system was first developed by Bradford Investment to insert spam advertisement into nearby digital devices that were in direct line of sight. Cunning Socialites blended this technology with their real-time holographic editing software to protect their public appearances, preventing others from making money off them by blurring their recordings. The Body Count Conglomorate quickly noticed its covert military potential and refined the technology to enable full digital invisibility.



Neon Hunters

- **Common Motivations:** Economic power, character growth.
- **Common Characteristics:**
  - Brave, decisive, clever, entrepreneurial, fun, organised.
- **Common Names:** Same as Suits, see pg: 66.
- **Common Surnames:** Same as Socialites, see pg: 72.
- **Population:** 7.89% of Corp.

- **Common Traits:**
  - Gadgeteer (Resources), Aug - Tech (Strength), Looking Good (Wealth), Higher Mission (Resolve), Holography/Stream Surfer (Computers), Bait Fire (Exotic).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Ion/Particle Gun, Enhance Zone/Show Off Arcane. Functional Tactical Suit, Ablative Assault Suit, Auto Locker, Burst Shield, Wealth/Electronics/Computers Toolbox.

"Those Suits arrogantly believe themselves to be great because they stand upon the shoulders of giants. But their stagnation will be the undoing of us all, as they risk bringing down the entire Corporation when they fall.

You must understand that the path of life is more important than the end. Find the hardest worthy thing in your life that you can carry, and carry it for as far as you can. This will make some of you into giants."

– Jane Pendelbury, aka Based Mum,
Neon Hunter message board.

"We're the TRUE capitalists!
You're the parasites!"

– Neon hunter graffiti.

While most Corporates aspire to a life of luxury and security wearing a suit in a well-paid office job, there are those who look back fondly to the first Corporates who started it all. Those who had little and risked everything to venture out into the unknown and to build the impossible. These Neon Hunters (a disparaging term popularized by Keaton Ark to describe Maxwell Brightstar's 'loser' parents) see a great danger in the Corporation becoming a victim of their own success. The leaders of the Corporation have overlooked the vital components of Capitalistic philosophy that encourages dynamic change, personal responsibility and the dangers of stagnation.

The Board of Management (BoM) would have people think that they encourage innovation and are against the evils of a planned economy and centralised control. But the largest companies are slowly replacing their dynamic and innovative leaders with risk-mitigators, accountants and PR professionals. Established market leaders are increasingly diverting funds away from development and into marketing as they squeeze the last drops of vitality out of their products and work-forces. Power is increasingly found in monopolies and market manipulation, not in innovation and product superiority.

To many these attitudes are soul-destroying because they understand that these outcomes – though profitable in the short term – will inevitably lead to a hollow and dead Corporation. In contrast to this, Neon Hunters are trying to embody the full range of Capitalism's most powerful ideals of meritocracy, leading a dynamic and fulfilled life that does not live in fear of change and loss, and that is resistant to the traps of power and the rot of complacency.

Culture

The cultural lines between the Suits and the Neon Hunters are often blurry, as many exist within the same spaces and draw from the same cultural wells. While it is true that Neon Hunters often lack social status within mainstream Corp culture, they are often not without money. And with the rise of Maxwell Brightstar – the son of two Neon Hunter truckers – to the number one seat on the BoM, there has been a recent surge of interest in their ideals (not that Maxwell has directly advocated for them).

Some powerful figures within the Corporation have labelled the movement dangerous and anti-capitalist. As Neon Hunters are often loud and proud about their ideals and attract those that do not fit into mainstream Suit culture, they make themselves an easy scapegoat for those looking to divert people's attention.

Those who are amenable towards Neon Hunter ideals tend to fall into three camps; the disenfranchised who are looking for change, dynamic and competent individuals who do not wish to lean on wider Corp culture, and those within the established order who secretly believe their criticism of the Corporation hold some merit. Most would only consider those within the middle group to be true Neon Hunters, as they are the only ones who are able to live up to their ideals of discarding security. Some within the later group see the Neon Hunter movement as a fight for the soul of the Corporation, a battle over who should run the Corp… the accountants or the innovators.

Life on the Move

Neon Hunters tend to work and live on spacecraft away from Alabaster, either as the owner-manger or as hired crew. While many work as freelance haulers and occasionally as mercs, they have a preference for vessels that lean towards exploration. They also like to work with mixed-species crews as they are fond of being exposed to new cultures, ideas and products.

But despite being more dynamic than many Corporates, Neon Hunters still have great respect for order. Their ships tend to be as clean and as orderly as most Corp vessels, though often with a little more edgy embellishment and a few more makeshift non-Corp modifications to their systems.

As the most successful Neon Hunters tend to be young, skilled and have a strong disposition towards personal growth, they have become quite popular in some circles with the other species… even to some degree with the notoriously antagonistic Kaltorans. This is a feature that the BoM wishes to encourage and has granted the Neon Hunters a small amount of political protection.

Technology

Neon Hunters have a keen eye for quality and a love of the new, two traits that don't always go well together. It common for Neon Hunters to have heavily personalized weapons made up of technologies from multiple species and ancient ruins.

Data Haulers

As the distance between star systems is so vast, data must be physically hauled between them by spacecraft, even between those with Jump Gates. Many freight vessels will offer low-cost unsecured options for regular mail, but those wishing to send secure or large quantities of data will commonly supply their own lock-boxed hard drives to trusted ships.

As Neon Hunters are fond of visiting distant colonies they will regularly haul non-time critical data back to Haven. Where they will deliver them to a local courier service or deposit them by hand to their destination.

Deep Space Comm

An expensive and non-reproducible technology that can create a small self-perpetuating wormhole that can carry a signal to a similar device in another star system. The Archons (and presumably the X'ion) did not have access to this ancient technology until it was created by the Mechonids in the final years of the Great War. The Neon Hunters were the among the first to steal this technology (while the Mechonids were still hibernating), but it was perfected by the Palantor.

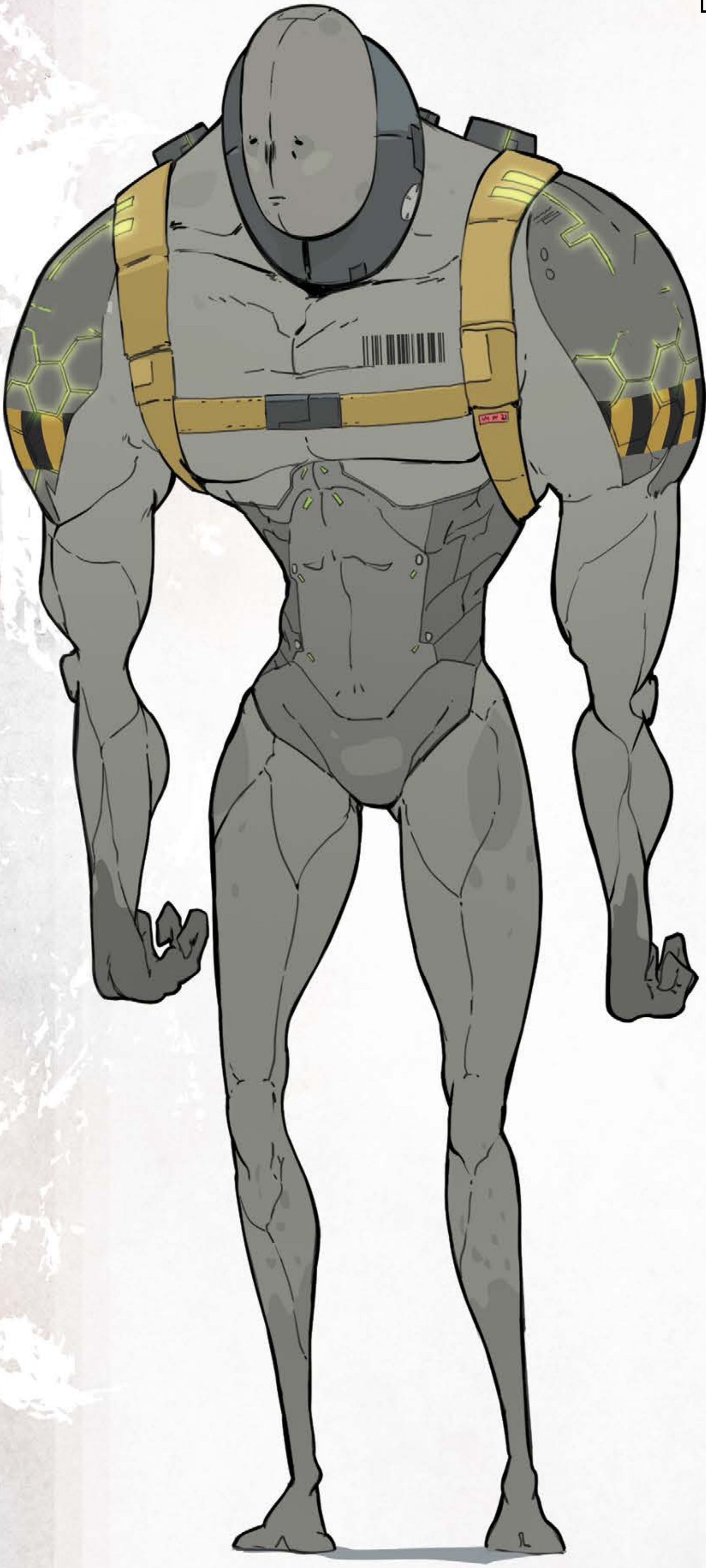
OMNI

This is not a singular technology, but a street name that was popularized by Neon Hunters (and later adopted by wider culture) to describe devices that are all-encompassing for a specific area. Such as OMNI Keys that use solid-holo and complex data-breaking programs to unlock all simple locks, both electronic and mechanical. Or OMNI Translators that alter a users language through simple speakers and microphones.

Stasis Chamber

Nearly all Neon Hunters and long-range travellers make use of these chambers to put their crew into suspended animation for long voyages between star systems. Saving them from excess consumption of supplies (even for Zhou) and boredom. Most of these systems are based on cryogenics, but some advanced psionic-based chambers work on time-dilation.

Standard stasis chambers will slightly slow the ageing process of its users and are dangerous to children and infants (as their malleable neurons require stimulation to ensure healthy development). Chambers that completely stop the ageing process (and may be used by children and infants) are much larger, and are commonly used by colony ships and haulers that make regular long voyages (though desperate haulers may not wish to lose precious cargo space).



FLESH Robots (NPC)

- **Creator:** FLESH Inc.
- **Average Height:** 1.85m
- **Average Life Span:** 8 years.
- **Population:** 12.34 million.

- **Common Motivation:** Obedience.
- **Common Characteristics:** Determined, selfless, submissive.
- **Example Name:** Engineering Unit BV132a_Dray.

- **Common Traits:**
  - Aug - Muscular (Strength), Slow and Steady (Mobility), Erratic (Intelligence), Pack Mule (Physical), Persistent (Resolve).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - ARK Mining Laser & Kit Gun, ARK Demo Charge Shell, Shock Stick Melee, Metal Body/Energised Plates Assault Suit, Grav Belt, FLESH Servant, Mechanics/Electronics Toolbox.

"Low cost. High output. Total obedience.
See your productivity soar, with FLESH: the workforce of YOUR future."
– FLESH Inc. advertising slogan.

While Corporates are no strangers to the art of automation, many manual labour jobs still require the spark of adaptability that only an organic worker can provide. FLESH Inc. was all too happy to provide the perfect compromise with their flagship product: FLESH organic robots.

Formulated deep in the laboratories of Eden Prime, FLESH are grown to be strong, well equipped and pre-programmed with the necessary skills for their specific job. Scorching deserts, radiation-blasted wasteland or even in the vacuum of space; the FLESH can be found on almost every Corp facility, quietly and diligently performing manual labour for their Corporate masters, and completely oblivious to everything outside their designated task.

Made to Order

Building space stations around Alabaster was backbreaking work, with labour initially undertaken by a vast Nephilim and Corp workforce. Innovation came in the form of early FLESH units, nothing more than dense organic tissue melded around a bionic frame. The end result: a simple worker with the ability to lift and carry, as well as follow simple directions. Their low production and maintenance costs appealed to both species, and with Nephilim steadily freed from their duties after the creation of Alabaster One, the FLESH became the dominant manual labourers across Corp operations.

FLESH units are more than simply cheap and tough, coming pre-loaded with skills and tools that can be customised for any worksite. Mining lasers, shock sticks, blasting equipment, welding torches and more; most FLESH are created with specialised toolkits built into their limbs. A sturdy outer carbon-based organic layer provides excellent resistance to extreme heat and cold, and they require only the barest storage space to recharge after lengthy shifts that can last for weeks at a time.

FLESH are both grown and constructed, their organic components developed in mutagenic vats and are pieced together around a sturdy Synth Steel skeleton. This process has been refined over a decade to allow custom-made FLESH to be shipped out in a matter of weeks. Mass-produced on Eden, FLESH Inc now has locations across all major Corp settlements for convenient delivery of new units.

Minds

FLESH Inc has been accused of secretly raiding Kaltoran morgues and Palantor laboratories to acquire stolen components to use in their mysterious programming methods. Such claims are fervently denied, although rumours still circulate of harvested Kaltoran and Palantor memories being used to form the foundation of FLESH technical skills. This has resulted in several Kaltoran and Palantor extremist groups launching violent terrorist attacks on known FLESH laboratories in their search for evidence. But no such raids have yet resulted in compelling evidence to support their suspicions.

The cognitive abilities of the FLESH are carefully calculated. They are given just enough to make basic work-related decisions and a small amount of adaptability that gives them an edge over basic digital robots. Although batches are pre-programmed with specific mechanical skills, common across the entire synthetic range is absolute loyalty and submission to their imprinted owners. The latest experimental units are even capable of simple mimicry, allowing them to refine their skills by copying existing FLESH and eliminating the need for any basic training. Nephilim programmers – nicknamed 'Shephards' – keep a constant vigil on FLESH worksites, honing their craft to a keen edge in service of creating more productive units.

FLESH live to work, lacking the mental capacity to comprehend their place in the universe beyond the current task.

Urban Legends

Suspicions regarding FLESH Inc's mysterious programming methods usually only lasts as long as a single billing cycle. Once FLESH units have been deployed and costs dramatically decrease, Corp managers are typically content to let the Nephilim scientists have their trade secrets. Little thought is given to the artificial minds of the FLESH, besides pouring funds into making them more efficient and pre-loaded with increasingly complex technical skills. And yet, rumours persist of anomalies: rogue units demonstrating erratic behaviour. Foremen have reported unusual neural activity during charging cycles, at times when FLESH units should be entirely powered down. These 'dreams' lead to minor acts of disobedience and distracted behaviour, and in extreme cases, FLESH have been known to abandon the worksite altogether. Here, the stories become hazy, with many dismissed as fanciful rumours by society at large. Tales are told of FLESH on the run, hunted by Nephilim and Corp kill squads. Others tell of rogue FLESH from across the region attempting to move towards Mishpacha or Eden.

Officially, FLESH Inc denies these incidents as slander, libel and deliberate sabotage by corporate rivals. Some blame Kaltoran and Palantor activist groups for crafting these colourful urban legends, painting the FLESH as a sentient species suffering in their supposed 'struggle for freedom'. Whether a simple malfunction or something greater, the fate of a runaway FLESH is always brutal. These rogue investments are treated with the same respect as any other faulty appliance: either terminated on the spot, or returned to the sunless labs on Eden Prime to be picked apart by their creators.

Technology

FLESH are clear demonstration of what can be achieved when two different species combine their skills and resources.

ARK Tools

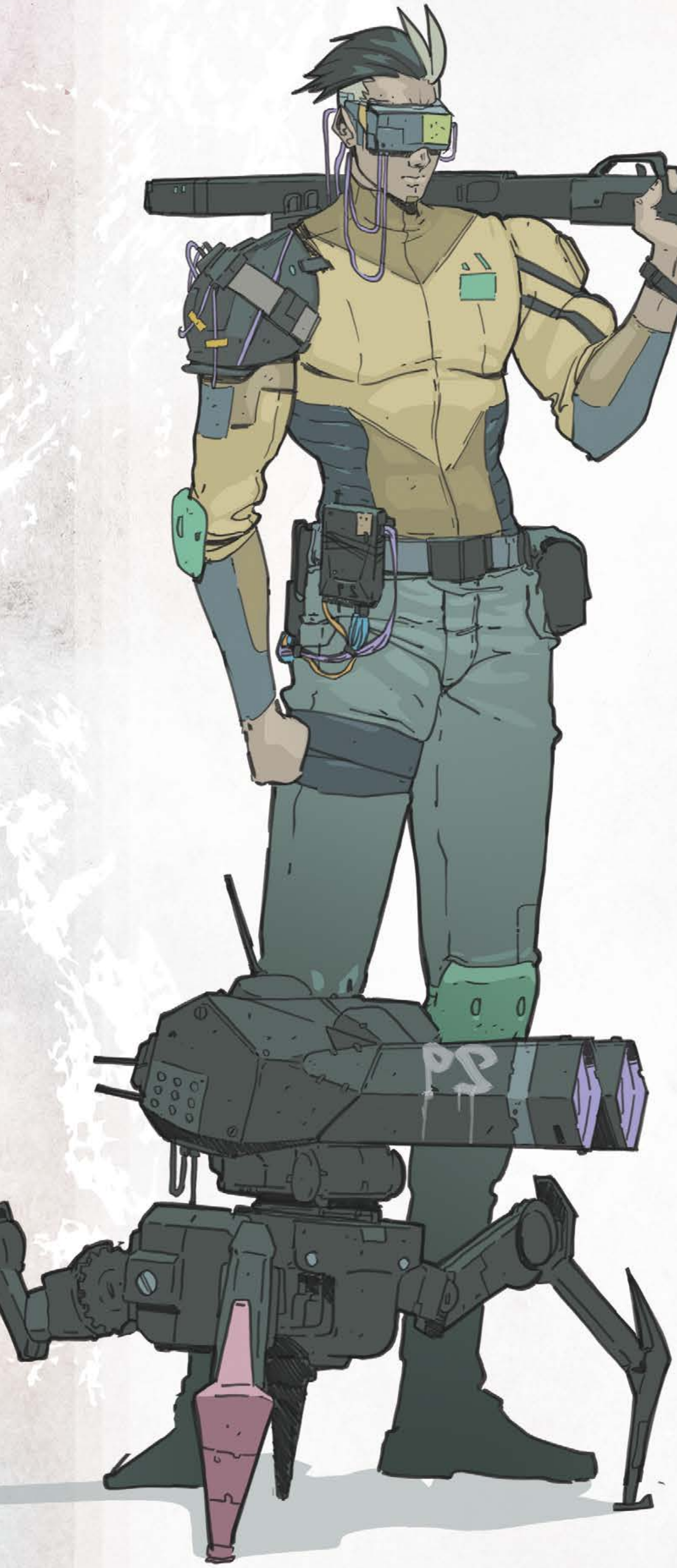
While early FLESH models were limited to lifting and carrying, subsequent units have been steadily refined to create FLESH units for every type of job, no matter the tool required. A lucrative partnership between FLESH Inc and ARK Founding – the second-largest company in the Corporation – has resulted in most units now bearing their exclusive fittings, readying to use ARK-branded equipment… and making them incompatible with tools created by any other supplier. While ARK mining lasers and demolition charges are among the best in the business, companies wanting to avoid paying premium ARK prices have taken to jury-rigging their FLESH units with cheaper tools, sometimes to disastrous effect.

ARK tools are also popular among price-conscious mercenaries and rebels, with their lasers, demolition charges and gravity-ripping mining hammers being common armaments among those on the fringes of society. Ever-ready to turn a profit, ARK has started to embrace this unexpected side-market.

Space Trains

The popularity of FLESH inevitably pushed the need for efficient transportation. While smaller batches are transported by traditional haulers and space-trucks, large regular orders require the use of massive space trains. These unique interstellar crafts consist of a single ship towing long lines of connecting cargo carriages. Primarily used for the transportation of FLESH units and raw materials, the carriages themselves have minimal protection both inside and out, primarily relying upon the train's immense speed to protect them from would-be raiders.

By necessity, space trains are built to travel at immense speeds, often accelerating for days at a time to build up the required velocity to enter Jump Space through a moderately sized portal that will only be opened for brief period. The slightest speed miscalculation (or premature Jump due to attack) will result in the slicing off of entire carriages. This is also why carriages closer to the head of the train are stocked with the most valuable commodities. In recent years pirate attacks on space trains have become increasingly regular, which has prompted companies to protect their investments with cheap non-Auxilia mercenaries while the train builds up its required speed.



Vargartians

- **Common Motivations:** Economic power, social status, survival.
- **Common Characteristics:**
  - Abrasive, pragmatic, stubborn.
- **Common Names:**
  - Angus (m), Ashley (f), Belle (f), Handley (m), Veronica (f), Willa (f).
- **Common Clan Names:**
  - Ardwun, Monder, Osmoth, Qwaris.
- **Population:** 14.66% of Corp.

- **Common Traits:**
  - Jack of all Trades (Culture), Spotter (Awareness), Robotics (Mechanics), Tinkerer (Electronics), Atmospherics (Planets), Kill Shot (Small Arms).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Ion/Particle Gun, Kinetic Grenade, Support Companion. Functional Tactical Suit, Bucket/Hawk/Wasp Bot, Survival Pack, Mechanics/Electronics/Planets Toolbox.

"Yea, you're right, we are Vargarti trash. And you polished turds best run back to your masters before this trash's buddies roll up on you with trucks, gatling bots and long guns to show you who owns this ranch and dig site.

Now piss off before I give you yet another reminder as to why your kind are too weak to make on Varsphere!"

– Angus Qwaris to an ARK Founding reclamation officer,
a day before the Old Grit Saloon shootout.

When the Corporation were created by the Archons they were named the Vargarti, after the planet Varsphere that they were placed on and restricted to. They grew to despise that name as a reminder of their rejection by their creators, and it saw almost no use for multiple generations during the Years of Darkness. But its use has experienced a revitalization since the Corporation left the Var system to colonize Haven. Those they left behind, or who chose to remain, felt a desire to distinguish themselves from the Corporation, and experienced an increased sense of pride in their own cultural distinctiveness. The name Vargarti took on a new life and meaning, no longer a label of inferiority, but one of rugged strength, ingenuity and pride. Those that call themselves Vargarti are making a statement that they see their roots in Varsphere and not the Corporation, even if they were not born on that desolate desert world.

But despite their glaring cultural differences, the Vargartians and Corporates can't help but share many traits due to their common ancestry and interlocking cultures (largely due to the Corporations return to Varsphere with the creation of the Haven-Var Jump Gate). Vargartians value material possessions as much as any Corp, but found in vehicles, robots, tech scraps and guns more than credits and shares. They also value fashion and style, but expressed through wild punk-desert raider, laid back bovine rancher, or scrappy tech-miner aesthetics. A Vargartian's choice of clothing and grooming habits are a declaration of their place within a society, a loud statement of their allegiances and vocation. Vargartians are also excellent resource managers, which is a required trait to survive on their barren homeworld. But where the Corp and the Varagti deviate is in their ideals of personal independence and displays of wealth beyond their means, two characteristics that only the most affluent of Vargartians can indulge.

Changing Times

Nearly all Vargartians were nomadic before the rise of Vix and the Corporation. Clans, trucks and cattle herds endlessly moved between watering holes and ruins as ion storms, feral Nephilim and rival clans pushed them around.

After the great exodus of their people to Haven, those that remained found themselves relatively spoilt for space, and most settled down in abandoned towns and settlements. They set up fences for their vast Thud Cow herds, established trade routes between watering holes and ancient ruins. But a few did not give up their ancestral nomadic lives, and some saw this as a chance to gain power through force.

The return of the Corporation to Varsphere has changed things once again, especially by those that the megacorporations have displaced, swelling the numbers of the desert raider and nomadic clans. But most have held firm, not giving up their ranches and dig sites to the returning Corp without a fight.

A few Vargartians have made their way to Haven, but they find little acceptance there. The Kaltorans see them as Corporates pretending to be rough and tough, and the Corps see them as backwater hicks.

Language: Corp Code (CC)

This is a complex and robust digital language that was first developed by Vargartians during the Years of Darkness to interface with ancient Human robotics and Ursai equipment. It has since been further developed by the Corporation to be an ideal language for networking, large-scale computations, and lays the foundational infrastructure for their Streams and robots.

Technology

Vargartians have survived on Varsphere by salvaging materials from Ursai and ancient Human ruins. They are masters of adapting disparate technologies and systems, particularly those of a robotic nature. The weather of Varsphere can be harsh on this equipment, which has taught the Vargartians to prioritise durability.

Drones

These mechanical (or at times, organic) robotic machines play a vital role in many species' economies, but particularly the Corporations and Eden Brood Nephilims, who are both wanting a large workforce.

Despite the complexity of some programs that run these drones, there is yet to be the confirmed existence of true AI, not even among the Palantor or ancient Humans.

Clans

Most Vargartians belong to an ancestral clan, made up of many families and recruits that once wandered the deserts of Varsphere. They like to keep to themselves, except for when their leaders gather together for Dune Meet at the Crest of the World mountains.

Ardwun (Great Clan)

The slavers of Ardwun valley were the first great clan to be routed by Vix the 'Smiling Slayer' and his Board of Management warlords during the formation of the Corporation. After two generations among the dunes of the Great Wastes they have returned in power, raiding towns and conveys for slaves in their preposterously decorated vehicles.

Monder (Great Clan)

Cave-dwellers and tech-miners from beneath the Crest of the World mountains, clan Monder are known for their secretive ways and access to rare Human technologies. The Palantor have long sought to form an alliance with the clan, but have been unable to gain an audience with their ruler, the Scrap Tyrant.

Neotech

Despite their small size, this clan is quite wealthy due to their leader Jordan Neotech and his ownership of Theli station around the planet Equity.

Osmoth (Great Clan)

Masters of wind and speed, clan Osmoth are the undisputed rulers of the ever-shifting Sea of Sands. This nomadic tribe rides the dunes on wind-propelled skimmers as they explore the furthest reaches of their continent for undiscovered resources. They're a mystical and free-spirited people with a complex religion that revolves around spirits and silent meditation. It is only a matter of time before they form a connection with the Twi-Far and the Faren.

Qwaris

A fractured but proud clan that holds many large ranches around the Corp city of Varsphere One and the Agricultural towns of Acham and Baybury.

Rouchly

A moderate sized clan that was thrust out of obscurity with the selling of a prime Human ruin's location to the Corp. Leading to the founding of the Heygrove town and the clans shift into space hauling.

Sunseekers

Famous for their pilots, this small space-born clan resides on one of the many moons of the gas giant Bourse. Many Sunseekers have made their way to Haven, banking on their clan's famous name to find work as pilots, with the very best being recruited by the Body Count Conglomerate to work as fighter pilots or trainers.

Stims

- See Rule Book pg: 152 for the Addicted Focus Trait.
- See Rule Book pg: 178 for the Stim Utility items.
  - A '1 Use' variant of these may be acquired through the use of the Gadget Misc item, see Rule Book pg: 192.

Stim addiction is widespread throughout all levels of the Corporation. The initial decision to take a stim is commonly for medical, recreation or performance enhancement reasons. Many large bio-tech companies (such as C.U.R.E) are aided through skilled Nephilim scientist to create stims that are not only incredibly addictive, but also with very powerful positive effects. All of the most impactful stims have significant side-effects, the least of which is draining away a person's income.

Clear

Many plants on Mishpacha are known for their medical applications, including the famous Blue Star flower. Early colonists were fond of the plant's aroma and found themselves feeling more 'alive and active' when it was burned in nearby fire pits on their work sites. It only took a few weeks for multiple companies to release products based around the flower and many other alternative plants. The most popular of these products was the CLEAR cigarette, whose branding rights are now owned by C.U.R.E.

The modern Clear comes in hundreds of forms, most of which have no Blue Star flower in them, as C.U.R.E prefers cheaper synthetic alternatives. Those wanting the real thing will often purchase cheap C.U.R.E cigarettes and replace the internal contents with their blend of flavours, dried petals and leaves.

Blue Star petals produce a psychoactive chemical that sharpens the mind by compartmentalizing thoughts and emotions. This is incredibly useful when a person is trying to focus on a set task, but can be disastrous if they are suffering from depression, fear, or other dominant negative thoughts... as all alternative ideas and feelings are pushed to the side. **Intense addiction** has been linked to bouts of extreme aggression and has been connected to multiple cases of Twilingers separating from their Faren. Clear is illegal on all Twi-Far ships and colonies.

Draz

An incredibly addictive and powerful chemical concoction, originally crafted by brilliant Nephilim scientists under contract from the Drazco corporation. Draz was created to be a literal "opiate of the masses." Their goal was to give the people a substance that would not only boost their efficiency, but would also keep them addicted to a product they could control. To this end, Draz has performed perfectly.

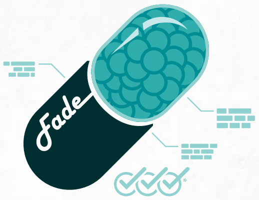
Draz appeals to people from all walks of life and comes in many different forms, but primarily in energy and alcoholic beverages. Garish advertisements for Draz can be found in all Corp spaces, from remote jungle settlements on Mishpacha to the opulent streets of the Alabaster One space station. With most making use of advanced mental manipulation technologies and automated spamware.

Draz has greatly affected the economy and ecology of the sector. Entire criminal organisations have built themselves around controlling local inventories of Draz products. Addicted pirates find Draz shipments to be irresistible targets and often make desperate attempts to strike at Draz supply caravans. Many shadow wars have been fought over the Draz supply. After all, having an entire city desperately addicted to your product is incredible lucrative.

Light Addiction: A minor addiction to Draz is expensive to maintain, but can allow a person to go without sleep for days, while going without can cause intense sensitivity to light. Close attention to an addict's eyes with reveal a faint pink glow in the Iris.

Medium Addiction: As addiction to Draz increases, so does the user's mental instability. They find themselves in an almost ceaseless rage. Because of this, combined with increased strength, they begin to easily and freely hurt the people around them.

Complete Addiction: Once a user is wholly dependent on Draz, the drug's bio-replication mutagens morph their physiology. Their body adapts to survive on Draz alone, with no need for any other nourishment. The user's organs become decentralised, spread throughout their entire body, and are replaced with a ghoulish grey-pink sludge that keeps the body alive in any situation. The mutant can function without their organs, limbs, or even head.



Fade

Without question Fade is the number one selling pain reduction medication on the market and is a cornerstone of C.U.R.E's product line.

Fade works by attaching itself to the opioid receptors that are found throughout the body, including the brain, spinal cord and gastrointestinal tract. This disrupts the transmission of pain messages to the brain, but does not treat the cause. Synthetic forms of Fade were widely used throughout the Great War by the Kaltorans and Legion, but are also naturally produced by many Nephilim bodies after they suffer harm.

Side effects of Fade are relatively light in comparison to many other stims on the market. But may include slowed breathing, low blood pressure and sleepiness. The primary threat of Fade is its addictive nature, ease of access, and depreciating effects. C.U.R.E has dominated the market through the mass production of Fade and marketing it as a 'one size fits all' medication for pain relief. Nearly all competing products have been pushed aside, including those for mild pain with almost no side effects. Non-C.U.R.E and Nephilim doctors seldom prescribe Fade.

Fire

With the revealing of the Palantor in the Haven system many Corporates became increasingly keen for 'authentic' Human cuisine. But unsurprisingly they did not enjoy these foods (this may be because the Palantor's memories on how to produce these ancient foods were poor, and/or a lack of correct produce) and recipes were altered to match Corp pallets while maintaining 'Human' branding.

Out of this craze came a little-known synthetic alcoholic beer called Fire Water. This bitter-tasting and cheap beverage became popular among underworld drug dealers who found that unlike most alcoholic beverages it provided an excellent base for their narcotic experimentations. A trait that was quickly noticed by the manufacturer who changed their product into a powerful stim-laced cocktail. This new drink only found a small market and the manufacturer went bankrupt, but not before the formula for Fire Water was stolen and spread across the underworld.

Fire, as it is now known, is the street name used to describe a wide range of alcoholic stims based on this original formula. These cocktails are incredibly painful to drink and are not particularly popular outside hardened criminal, merc and Legion circles. Being able to quickly down a full bottle of Fire will get you a lot of respect in many rough bars, but may also knock you unconscious.

Apart from bravado and social status, some drink Fire during combat situations as they claim it gives them a 'killer instinct'. There may be some truth to this as many bottles of Fire include Nephilim DNA, a fact that would repulse many Legion who favour the drink. **Long term use of Fire** may mutate a person's mind, effectively making them part Nephilim. But these mutations never fully mesh with the body (even in Nephilim) and will cause the user to be in a constant state of pain.

Fuzz

While not organic, these small electronic plugs are considered to be a stim by those who buy and sell them. Within each plug is a small scanner that runs a current through the body of the organic or robotic user, analyzing how they respond to different energy patterns. This data is then used to create an individualized and unique euphoric experience.

Fuzz was first designed by Palantor scientists for combat use, briefly shielding the user from harm and stabilizing their systems against Disruptors. But it did not take long for a few clever Palantor to discover that these plugs could be used to replicate sensations that they thought only possible in their Network. Despite the risks of extended use, many Palantor make daily use of Fuzz to experience a small slice of what unique pleasures their former lives offered.

Haste

Physical games have long held a prominent place in Corp culture, dating back long before the Great War. In the days when the Vargarti were held under the Ursai they used much of their copious free time to enjoy athletic and ball-orientated sports. After the Great War many nomadic tribes made wide use of vehicles and robots, which were utilised in various sports that were often quite brutal and were occasionally a means of settling disputes.

After the founding of the Corporation and the exodus to Haven it did not take long for many entertainment industries to grow up around new versions of these old games. Sports are not only a way for the Corp to indulge in entertainment, tribalism and gambling, they also offer an almost spiritual experience.

For the Corp, sports are a glimpse into a perfectly meritocratic society where only the best succeed. No one cares who a person is, or where they come from, only if they can win within the confines of the game.

Prominent athletes are made and broken every month, often quite literally. Recruiters will buy up the Raise Policy contracts of promising young candidates and drop them into harsh training programs that are 100% geared towards a specific sport. When they enter that sport they will have a very short time to prove themselves. Nearly all participants fail and are abandoned to a Corporate life that they are not trained or prepared for. But for those few who succeed they can expect several years of incredible wealth and prestige, and then a sharp drop into obscurity. So daunting is the threat of failure and the allure of success that it unsurprising that many turn to performance-enhancing stims to create and/or prolong their careers.

Various muscle-building stims and augmentations (both biological and mechanical) are commonplace in all physical sports. But none are as notorious as the stim Haste.

During an infamous event that is now known as the Kill Goal the striker **Penelope Star** ripped her body apart during a live broadcast of **Dash Ball**. A million onlookers watched in horror as her muscles and bones tore themselves from her body as pure momentum threw her corpse across the goal line… and two million more cheered on the bloody spectacle.

As major sponsors, C.U.R.E forced the Dash Ball organisers and teams to publicly celebrate Penelope's sacrifice for victory and gave her a statue at the arena where she died. But as skilled athletes are expensive to produce it was of little surprise when most mainstream sports implemented new medical codes that restricted stims and augmentations. Corp sports are now split up into three categories; the mainstream Yellow (high restrictions), the edgy Green (medium restrictions) and the bloody Red (no restrictions).

Kaltoran

- **Creator:** Archons (Edoni station).
- **Average Height:** 1.65m
- **Average Life Span:** 68 (120 natural) years.
- **Population:** 129 million.
- **Principle Settlements:**
  - Kadash, Mishpacha and Gehenna (Haven), Dushara (Kasuf).
- **Government:** Tribal federation (Elders).
- **Primary Exports:**
  - Food, rare minerals (Corporation, Palantor), salvage (Legion).
- **Primary Imports:**
  - Fuel (Corporation), medical aid (Remnant), munitions (Legion).

- **Common Allies:** Legion, Twi-Far.
- **Common Rivals:** Corporation, Eden Brood Nephilim.

"All thirty-two of Zera's family were gathered on the platform waving goodbye. She could see her mother was crying on her father's shoulder. She swallowed the lump in her throat as she boarded the ship.

She was comforted that her family and ancestors would be travelling with her in her memories. Although she would miss them there was no doubt as to the importance of her purpose. Zera wanted a fresh start for her and her future children, Kadash was a sea of bad memories and she knew she needed better."

– Zera Thrift,
boarding the colony ark ship New Hope.

The Kaltorans were greatly favoured by their Archon creators, and for this they were especially hated by the X'ion. The genocide of the Kaltorans during the Great War was monstrous: it has been said by some that the Kaltorans suffered most during the war. All at the hands of X'ion's Archgenocrat general, the Devwi-Ich, who is also the current leader of the Eden Brood Nephilim.

Before the Great War the Kaltorans were an advanced and cultured people with a large nation that spanned across sixteen star systems. The Archons had gifted the Kaltorans with genetic memories, allowing the skills and wisdom of each generation to pass onto the next. Kaltoran society was finely tuned and operated on a caste system where each person was carefully trained to fulfil a specific role according to their lineage. This prosperous society produced vast amounts of resources for their Archon masters and made them the envy of their neighbours.

Betrayed by their Ursai (Remnant) allies, the border worlds of the Kaltoran nation quickly fell to a combined Ursai-Nephilim assault in the first months of the war. The Ursai would, in turn, be betrayed by the Nephilim, but not before giving the Devwi-Ich a strong foothold in the region. The Nephilim corralled the Kaltorans, many Legion and some Archons toward the Kaltoran capital system of Haven.

The Kaltorans fought well during the Great War, but as their nation's systems were so finely honed, they crumbled after key components and leaders were removed. The defenders would have held fast in Haven for a decade against the Nephilim if not for the arrival of the X'ion itself on the battlefield, who laid waste to all of their greatest plans and technologies to get at the Archons among their number.

In the end their capital world, Eden, was turned from a beautiful, fertile planet into a poisoned wasteland. The few Kaltorans who survived fled to to Kadash, where they descended to the bottom of the ocean and built underground settlements. Huddled in the deep and the dark, the survivors planned never to return to the stars.

Life on Kadash was short, dark, and brutal. Gathered in their overcrowded caverns and gripped by fear, the refugees savagely fought over what few resources they had. Isolating themselves into small tribal groups, the Kaltorans spent generations out of the light and many gradually lost their ability to see. Their desperation was so palpable that cannibalism became commonplace.

These nightmarish times lasted for seventy long years before any semblance of hope emerged; however, the deep psychological scars from these times are sustained through the curse of their genetic memories.

The return to a better life began with a new generation who were tired of living in constant fear. Finally repairing and restarting ancient nuclear reactors, these Kaltorans seized its power for hydroponics, light and anti-gravity fields to reclaim flooded chambers. This rebuilding of society became known as the Founding, and is celebrated by Kaltorans to this day with large meals of fish and many family games involving blindfolds and sweets. However, not all Kaltorans were ready for a new life, and many Dark Tribes remained in the tunnels below.

This new generation was bolder than their parents, but they still feared that the Nephilim lay in wait above their planet. It was not until they began to hear Corporate ship transmissions and digital advertisements that they began to rebuild their many rusted and broken spacecraft.

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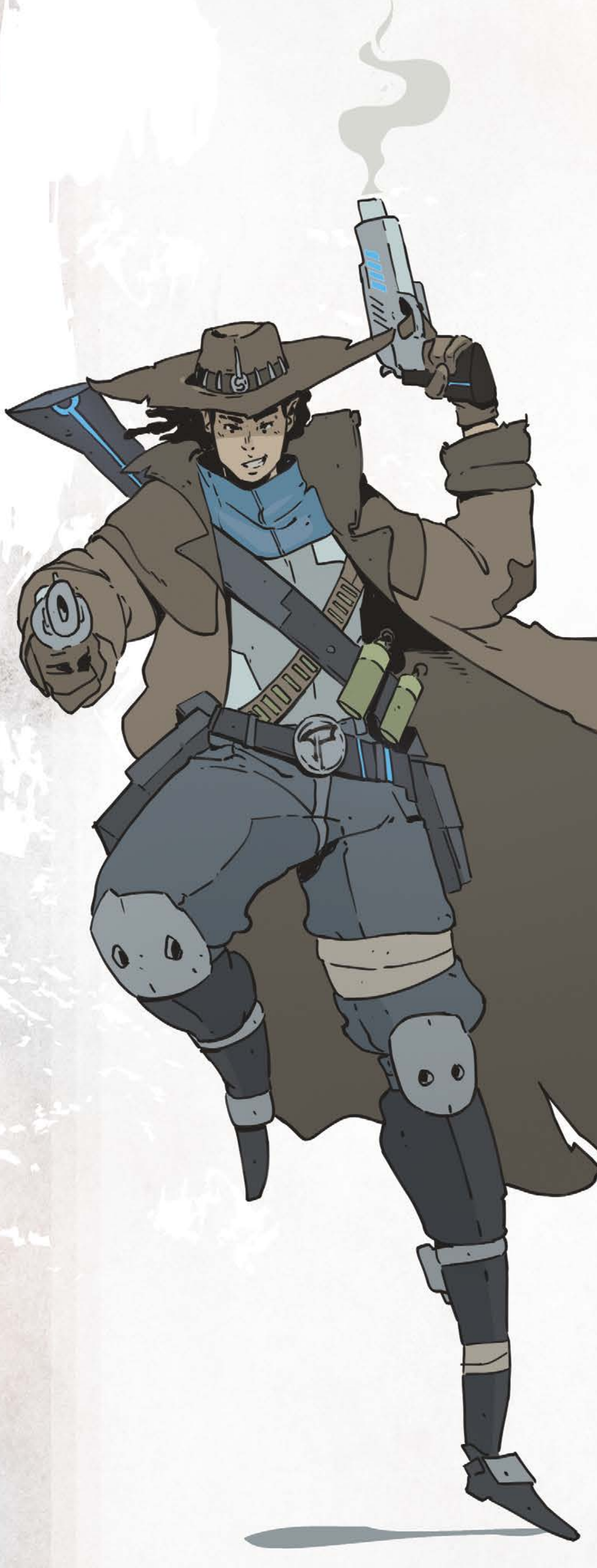
Despite many Kaltorans having good intentions and wanting in earnest to return to space to make a better life for themselves and to give their children positive memories... many were unprepared to see Nephilim working alongside the Corporation. The violent Kaltoran Embrace family were among the first to flee Kadash due to persecution (much of it justified). They, along with others, attacked the Corporation and the Nephilim, and almost kickstarted another war.

The Corporation also sought to take advantage of the Kaltorans with manipulative contracts, trade agreements and claims to unoccupied territory. But these were quickly ignored by the Kaltorans who simply did what they thought was right. Tensions calmed with the arrival of the Legion whom the Corporation employed as guards, and as calmer Kaltorans tribes and families emerged.



Rascals

- **Common Motivations:** Positive experiences, support family.
- **Common Characteristics:**
  - Friendly, inquisitive, opportunistic, optimistic, thrifty.
- **Common Names:**
  - Adam (m), Cain (m), Debra (f), Elijah (m), Esther (f), Eva (f), Gideon (m), Joseph (m), Sarah (f), Talia (f), Zera (f).
- **Common Family Names:**
  - Bam, Ember, Filch, Game, Juked, Omni, Swagger, Thrift.
- **Population:** 15.02% of Kaltorans.

- **Common Traits:**
  - Quick Draw (Reflexes), Swindler (Persuasion), Jack of all Trades (Culture), Reckless (Resolve), Cheap Shot (Small Arms).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Arc-Fire Bolt/Monomolecular Coil/Irradiated Gun, Grav Ripper Shell, Anti-Grav Melee, Slick Weave/Haze Mesh Tactical Suit, Show Off Stance, Mechanics Toolbox.

"She ain't much to look at being one half ancient ore miner, one-third solar-radiation scanner and goodness knows what for the rest. But she's mine and I love er.

Had to replace part of the navigation control panel with a brightly coloured kid's keyboard after a power surge blew the old one out last week. I also had to reinforce the prow shielding system from the rear nuclear reactor by running cables through the main thoroughfare. That may be a bit dangerous now that I think about it.

Hmm... maybe I should consider offloading her to a scrapper and pick up a new ship... Na, that would break my old ma's heart as she's set on seeing my little bro in this old girl once he comes of age."

– David Vibe,
captain of the Ugly Brick.

When most people think of the Kaltorans their thoughts commonly drift towards those nomadic freelancers who fly between planets in their Frankenstein-like spaceships visiting pubs, workshops and old friends. To some, they're a light-hearted friendly people who are always up for a chat and a game of cards, but to others they're dirty vagrants, swindlers, smugglers and pirates. In truth, many of them are all of these things and more.

These free-spirited souls would laugh if you ever called them a Rascal, but thanks to the Legion that has become their title as a means to separate the goods ones from the Vagabonds.

There is rarely such a thing as a typical day for a Kaltoran Rascal. But to speak in broad generalisations they would wake up late in a bunk on their ship, indulge in a few light vices such as a smoke and a drink with a crewmate or two before their captain awoke. Once the captain was up it would be time to check over the ship and perform the daily maintenance, which could take some time. While the crew is taking care of the ship the captain and a gifted crewmate would set about finding or working towards the completion of a job.

Work could be almost anything, from merc work to hauling cargo. Much of this would depend on the skills of the crew and the nature of their ship. A Rascal's ship is their home, workplace and everything in-between while they're not on a shore break. Crew are also rarely all Kaltoran, as having a broad set of skills and abilities offers more opportunities.

Genetic Memories

All Kaltorans have the mixed gift of carrying the genetic memories of their ancestors. At conception a Kaltoran child's mind is seeded with memories which will begin to bloom in their teenage years, with those from parents being the strongest. This trait is a mixed blessing, gifting them with skills and wisdom that were built up over many lifetimes, but also haunting them with terrors of the Great War and the Years of Darkness where their ancestors performed acts of violent barbarism and cannibalism to survive.

Kaltorans are eager to suppress these vile thoughts and replace them with new positive ones, not only for their own sake but also for their children. And there are few better methods of replacing these thoughts than an exciting and adventure-filled life on a spacecraft that travels to new worlds and into the great unknown.

Cut 'n' Shut Spacecraft

When the Kaltorans fled to Kadash during the Great War they took with them only those spacecraft their military deemed unsuitable for combat: mining vehicles, haulers, exploration craft, mobile hydroponic farms, solar arrays, pleasure barques and a million other vessels of unique design. Most were pulled apart for components, while others rusted in caverns that would eventually flood. After the Founding and the passing of their Years of Darkness many more were stripped down for yet more parts.

But once they set their thoughts towards re-emerging back to the stars the Kaltorans found themselves in need of working ships... of which there were none. Utilizing mechanical skills that were honed over generations of building subaquatic subterranean cities they set to work. Cutting up partially functional craft to attach to other partially functional craft in a crude technique called 'Cut 'n' Shut'. This produced thousands of working spacecraft that could once again return to the stars... as long as they had one or more skilled mechanics on board to keep them going!

> "We live, die, prosper, suffer, celebrate and cry as one family. We are the weakest and the strongest of us."
> – Yenta Swagger.

Due to the nature of their construction, Kaltoran ships frequently have duplicates of key systems, sealed off empty compartments, passages that lead nowhere and rooms with seemingly no purpose, creating many nooks and crannies for smugglers. The hodgepodge nature of the spacecraft demands a more intensive maintenance regimen, that is to say, they are constantly falling to pieces. Luckily, Kaltoran mechanics are experts at holding it all together with rivets, bolts and duct tape. Their ships are always fitted with a well-tested Aqua Shield to keep back the sea on voyages in and out of Kadash.

Some (and especially the Corporation) may look down upon these nomadic Kaltoran Rascals with their dirty trench coats, mismatched clothing and general unkemptness as an underprivileged people. But this could not be further from the truth.

Those selected to captain and crew these spacecraft were the privileged who were supported by large families and extended networks of friends to keep their ships maintained, armed and fuelled. In the years to come they would become the lifeblood of the Kaltorans. Allowing their people to settle on new worlds, establish vital trade routes, muster large fighting forces against powerful foes, salvage ancient wrecks, and to found mining colonies that could go toe-to-toe with the Corporation.

Barter & Commerce

The Kaltoran economy is based on reciprocity rather than currency. Items are traded directly for other items or the promise of favours. There is a general understanding that the exact value of the trade is unimportant; of primary concern is that both parties in the trade feel that they have not been cheated. This also commonly results in a vast network of favours being owed, keeping all Kaltorans families (in a sense) indebted to numerous other families.

If these debts become too unbalanced over many years a Great Settling is called, where the Captains and Elders of each family will sit down for a meal and a great big argument... often lasting weeks at a time. But no party can leave the event until a plan is formed to resolve the imbalance.

Kaltorans tend to conduct their trade at open markets of stalls and out of the cargo bays of landed spacecraft with posted goods for barter and goods accepted in trade. In this way buyers can go stall to stall to find a barter match. If no single vendor has the desired item, a complex chain of transactions will eventually result in the desired result.

Inter-species trade is also primarily done through barter, often with weapons and munitions acting as a crude currency. This can make trade especially difficult as Corporate Credits are looked down upon as 'yet another Corp con job'. But while many Kaltorans will not openly trade in Credit Chips while others are looking, they will happily do so in secret.

Always Armed

Nearly all Kaltorans from a young age carry a weapon at all times, a tradition that stems from their violent past. Weapons are openly carried as a declaration that one is prepared to defend themselves and their loved ones, with many being ancient family heirlooms that date back to the Great War.

Most of these weapons were of poor quality during the war and have been greatly modified by their many owners. They often carry tribal markings from when they were in use by the Dark Tribes, technologically improved by skilled weaponsmiths after the Founding, and then carefully decorated with commemorations as they were passed to each new owner. Every Kaltoran is expected to be both police enforcer and military soldier as is needed.

Cultural Pride & Celebrations

Kaltorans who have left Kadash often become 'more Kaltoran,' embracing many customs and traditions that they only gave moderate thought towards when they lived back on their homeworld. While they would wear whatever was onhand back at home, they now actively seek out clothing and weapons that match a certain stereotypical rustic Kaltoran aesthetic. They're also very careful to not lose their Kaltoran accent, even practising in private to make sure it is still pronounced when speaking other languages.

Driving these considerations is a fear that they may lose their way and be swallowed up by other cultures (especially the Corporation), and a discovery of a racial pride that makes them unique and the achievements of their ancestors special. At the cornerstone of maintaining this cultural pride are the many festivals and days of significance that were celebrated in each pit city during their formative years.

Each pit city was a melting pot of Kaltoran cultures, but cut off from each other until the Founding. In fact, many pit cities remained isolated until their reemergence back into space. This has resulted in each city having their own unique customs, or celebrating the same event (ie: the Founding) at different times. Also, as many pit cities track time in slightly different ways according to the rhythms of their machines, the length of a month, day and hour can be slightly different. But the Rascals don't really care about the finer points of adherence, just that the spirit of each celebration is honoured… even if it's on the slightly wrong day or month.

Founding Week

The largest festival event for the Kaltoran people is unmistakably Founding Week, where they celebrate the first Founders who restarted the nuclear reactors and led a reemergence out of the Dark Tribes. This event is celebrated at a different time and in a different way for each pit city according to the nature of their Founding. But slowly over the past few years, a pattern of organically merging these celebrations together looks to be inevitable, as Rascals living abroad are always keen to celebrate with other Kaltorans no matter their pit city of origin.

For Rascals these festivals typically involve large meals of fish, games involving blindfolds, sickly sweet drinks, dancing and dramatic retelling of great events from the past year.

Gift Day / Birthday

On the annual day of a Kaltorans birth they would typically present their parents with hand-made blue gifts and an affectionate letter. This tradition would continue until the child has their first Genetic Memory (known as a Flash) as a teen.

While most are considered too old for this tradition, most Rascals will send letters wrapped in blue back to their parents on their birthday, often with a small memento from their travels.

Language: Kaltoran

Despite their many cultural shifts over the past century, the Kaltoran language has remained largely intact due to their genetic memories. Those refugees who fled to Kadash during the Great War brought their cultural distinctives with them, including their own dialects and idioms. Some of these were lost during the Years of Darkness, while others merged together. Throughout this time when many Kaltorans lost their sight they expanded their language to include a touch-based component that can express many ideas, especially those in regard to direction and danger, along with streamlining many expressions.

The Kaltoran language is expressive, emotive and loud, often making good use of the speaker's hands in emphasis (Kaltorans often gesticulate even while speaking other languages). Kaltoran is also a useful language for explorers and archaeologists within the Haven system, as old Kaltoran ruins are very common.

Where modern Kaltoran is touch-oriented and loud. Old Kaltoran is more harmonious, peaceful and meditative, and it implies a deep sense of respect for places and people with most verb-forms. It is still an emotive language, but often uses more words to convey feelings.

Technology

Kaltoran technology is mysterious to the other species, as it is seemingly both primitive and advanced at the same time. Their equipment is often ancient, sometimes repaired or jury-rigged with makeshift components, giving it a dishevelled and rough appearance. At the same time, these technologies often use techniques that are lost to other species, as the Kaltorans can access knowledge from before the Great War through their ancestral memories.

The Kaltorans rely heavily on salvage for creating new devices, they are masters at finding and using old components and making them work with unconventional adaptations. Many Kaltoran families make their livelihood through salvage, especially for the Legion who rely on the Kaltorans to supply materials to expand and maintain their fleets.

Arc-Fire (Weapon)

This weapon works by separating electrodes to draw out an arc of electricity at a high voltage which heats the intervening material to create an extremely hot plasma. In melee weapons this works by having one electrode fired up from the hilt of a weapon to the tip of a rod/blade to create a glowing plasma field along the whole length, Arc-Fire bullets carry an electric charge, which on impact are discharged creating a burst of electricity and plasma in a similar fashion.

Arc-Fire weapons were in wide-spread use by the Kaltorans during the Great War, but few made it down to Kadash. But thanks in part to the tireless work of the Filch family they are now a common sight in all Kaltoran families.

Deflector Field

This field uses anti-grav technology to deflect incoming attacks that hit an edge of its field. A precise strike at the centre of the field will completely bypass its effect, making it most potent against long-ranged attacks.

Despite its Kaltoran origin this form of defence has become a favourite among Corps who would prefer to keep a distance whilst sending in the cronies. The Octanto corporation have attempted to reverse engineer this technology, but the result is always a slightly blurry and unstable field. These sub-quality Deflectors are still popular but are laughed at by Kaltorans.

Nuclear Power (Weapons & Fuel)

Almost all the original ancient fusion reactors on Kadash were pilfered for parts during the early days of the Years of Darkness, or are currently rusting away within the dens of the Dark Tribes.

The Kaltorans now use a variety of nuclear reactors to power their ships and pit cities, the oldest of which use Uranium, which is common in the mines of Kadash.

But Thorium is the prefered material as it is far more stable. The search for Thorium often pushes Rascal surveyors far out into the edges of explored space, as a single find could provide enough clean and safe energy for an entire Kaltoran city. The bi-products of these reactors are often turned into dangerous irradiated ammunition. This choice of fuel frustrates the Corporation as it is an alternative to their own products.

Refractor & Fold Shrouds

The shroud technology creates a forcefield which a layman would describe as 'hard', rather than a traditional 'soft' shield. These shrouds are managed by complex software that focus the energy of the shield against direct hits while ignoring near misses. There are two different styles of shroud technology:

Refractor Shrouds will immediately focus all the shields power to a single place as soon as a direct hit is detected to maximise stopping power. This makes the shield very effective against large singular hits, but vulnerable against a barrage of multiple strikes.

Fold Shrouds are more flexible, rather than committing all their power at once to a single source, they will hold some back to spread their effect against successive shots. This makes them particularly powerful against multiple successive hits.

"They're a dirty, disorganized, obstinate, emotional and violent people. It is no wonder that they are also poor."

– Stephanie Ark,
Corporate Regional Manager of ARK Foundings – Haven.

"When you're in with a Kaltoran, you're in all the way with a friend for life that will do almost anything for you. But if you're on the out, you're all the way out and best hope they're not a cannibal."

– Evelin Swagger,
Kaltoran captain of the Starfinder.

"We are the horrors that haunt their erratic minds, the monsters that ate their ancestors, and the fiends that occupy their lands. They may be keen for a new beginning, but as they are unable to let go of the past we will continually come to blows."

– Libicus,
Nephilim Tenebrous Gene Weaver.

"Despite their many rough edges they understand loyalty, respect and the power of tradition. We fought alongside each other in the Great War as allies and I would like to think that we will fight alongside each other again."

– Hector Mars,
Legion Auxilia.

"A curious and juvenile people who are full of surprises."

– Daishiro_049,
Palantor Data Hauler.

"The idols of the Corporation and the Nephilim are easy to see: pride, wealth, power and pleasure. But the idols of the Kaltorans are far more subtle: family, friends and adventure.

They have laid for themselves a most difficult trap, having turned good things into ultimate things. Things that will let them down, and that you should not build your life upon."

– Rudo Moyo,
Remnant theologian.

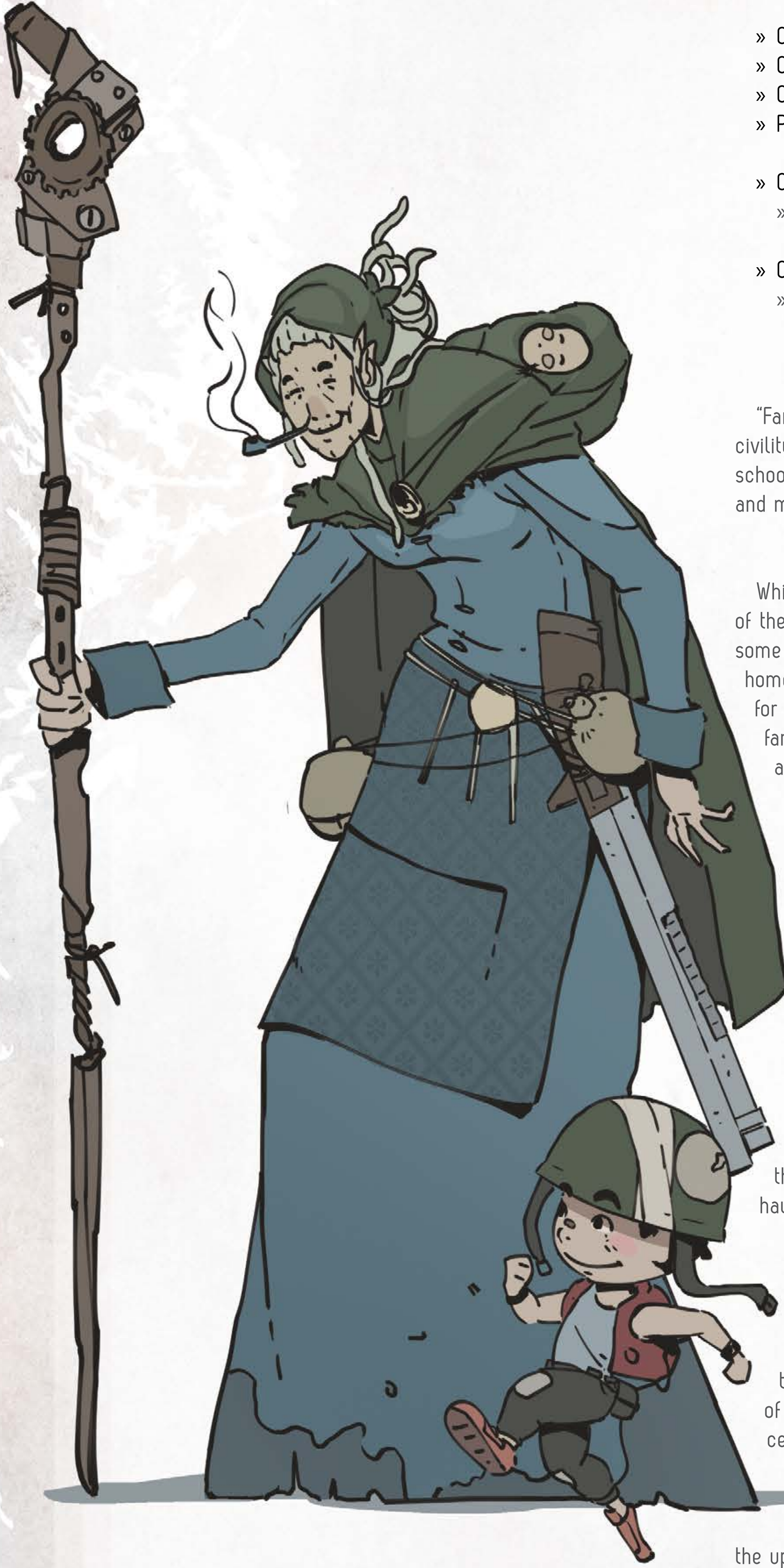
"You can run into them in the oddest of places out there in the void of space. But you can never quite know what to expect. They're just as likely to be in desperate need of aid as they are to be offering cheap spare parts that you required yourself.

I see many of them as kindred souls. Rough rocks hewn from the dirt and mud that have been cast aloft into space where they will be reforged once again."

– Django Sparkle,
Twi-Far Phoenix Symphony scout.

"A frustrating and violent tribe who often mistake us for Nephilim. But also a kind and generous tribe with much food."

– Zoogri,
Zhou trailblazer.



Watchers

- **Common Motivations:** Support family.
- **Common Characteristics:** Cunning, friendly, loyal, thrifty.
- **Common Names & Family Names:** Same as Rascals, see pg: 84.
- **Population:** 38.14% of Kaltorans.

- **Common Traits:**
  - Scavenger (Resources), Old (Strength), Ancestral Mind (Intelligence), Taunt (Persuasion), Read Motives (Psychology).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Arc-Fire Bolt/Monomolecular Coil Gun, Enhance Zone/Intimidate/Mock Arcane, Companion, Functional Tactical Suit, Wpn Maintenance Kit, Leadership/Psychology Toolbox.

"Family is everything, the building blocks of all societies. Instilling civility better than any law, a thirst of learning better than any school, social skills better than any friends, maturity faster than age, and material security better than any charity."

– Grandma Jinx.

While many Kaltorans have, or are working towards, moving out of the overcrowded pit cities beneath the endless oceans of Kadash, some have committed themselves to making it their permanent home. These Kaltorans are affectionately known as the Watchers, for they are watching over the family homesteads, the aquaponic farms, the spaceports, the workshops, and more. All for those who are going out into the universe to make new memories and new homes for the Kaltoran people. While the Watchers ensure there is always a place for them if they are ever in need respite.

Kaltorans living on Kadash are a hardy people who are used to never being alone. Their city walkways are crowded (especially in the upper levels), their houses are overflowing with multiple generations of family, and their compact spaceports are overflowing with goods to be traded and sent out to the colonies.

The only places where one might find solitude and quiet is the dark lower levels, among the massive life support tunnels and machines that maze beneath the cities. But these are the domain of the Dark Tribes, the cannibal nightmares that haunt the minds of every Kaltoran.

Pit Cities

The underground cities of Kadash are built around large central chambers called Hubs. Out from these a web of tunnels and causeways link hundreds of smaller chambers together. Vast life support systems are built into the bases of the Hubs. Mazes of massive tunnels and machines that are ceaselessly cleaning air and water, while simultaneously funnelling out flood water, sewage and trash.

Most Kaltorans live in the middle rings, work and mix in the upper rings, and only venture down to the lower rings when it is absolutely necessary.

Family

Family is the cornerstone of all Kaltoran societies. Family got them through their dark history and lives forever in their genetic memories, making it central to their lives. Family comes before anything else: Kaltorans live and work for their families and if necessary die and kill for their families. New family ties are created through marriage and adoption, both of which are celebrated with large ceremonies.

Each family is a subculture in its own right, each with its own traditions and values. Though family members are expected to follow their family's traditions, they do not generally try to force their traditions onto resistant members, and thus Kaltoran families can have extremely varied traditions.

As Kaltoran mates are prized for not only traditional qualities such as personality, wealth and beauty, but also skills, mental health and wisdom. It is not uncommon for partners to have children later in life. This has the advantage of providing children with mature memories from well-established parents, but with the downside of having less energy for their upbringing. As Kaltoran families commonly have six or more children, it is a necessity that they be raised by a large tribe of relatives and friends. Which is easier to do on Kadash.

Elders

Kaltorans have no centralized government and are instead organised around large family groupings. Each family is led by a senior patriarch or matriarch, often referred to as the Elder. A group of Elders from the most prominent families in a city meet on a regular basis to discuss large economic and political matters. These gatherings are called Old Geezer Huddles, and are more like informal dinners with talking points than they are government meetings. Each family in an Old Geezer Huddle is a free and independent entity but is accountable to the whole through reputation rather than law.

Each family has their own method for choosing their Elder. Most families choose the oldest capable leader, whereas some Elders are appointed by the previous one. Each Elder seeks the consensus of the family, and the power of their leadership is a reflection of their reputation and strength of personality.

Feuds

Rivalries and feuds between families and Elders are common. Some families have grudges that go back a hundred years, and their genetic memories guarantee that any significant slight will not be forgotten. Since the Founding, many families have turned murderous feuds into competitive rivalries. One such rivalry exists between the prominent Swagger and Jinx families, who regularly compete with one another for bragging rights.

Reputation

Much of what gives an individual or a family higher status than another is their reputation in their community. This higher status will often result in more favourable trades and verdicts in moral disputes. Kaltorans who are trustworthy, just, strong, bold, kind and fun are likely to enjoy greater status. As are those who have a record of good and adventurous deeds.

However, Kaltorans seen as callous, greedy, or selfish are not well-liked and may even be disowned by their families. The genetic memories which Kaltorans experience reinforce this status: children remember the deeds of their parents, both good and bad. This at times may result in entire family lines being viewed with suspicion.

Ancestral Worship

The Kaltorans practice a religion of praying to ancestors for guidance. This is more than an unfounded superstition for them, as they can access the experiences and wisdom of their ancestors through this prayerful meditation.

Focal points for these meditations are commonly around busts, sculptures and pictures of revered ancestors that are arranged into a small shrine. These are found in all Kaltorans homes and spacecraft, even by many who have turned to the All-Faith.

Food

The Kaltorans built the pit cities of Kadash without the intention of ever leaving. To ensure the success of this endeavour (and to shield against the return of cannibalism) they built massive aquaponic farms and deep-sea fishers. Now with so many Kaltorans leaving the planet they have found themselves overflowing with produce, which they sell to all of the other species for a low price if they come to collect it.

Technology

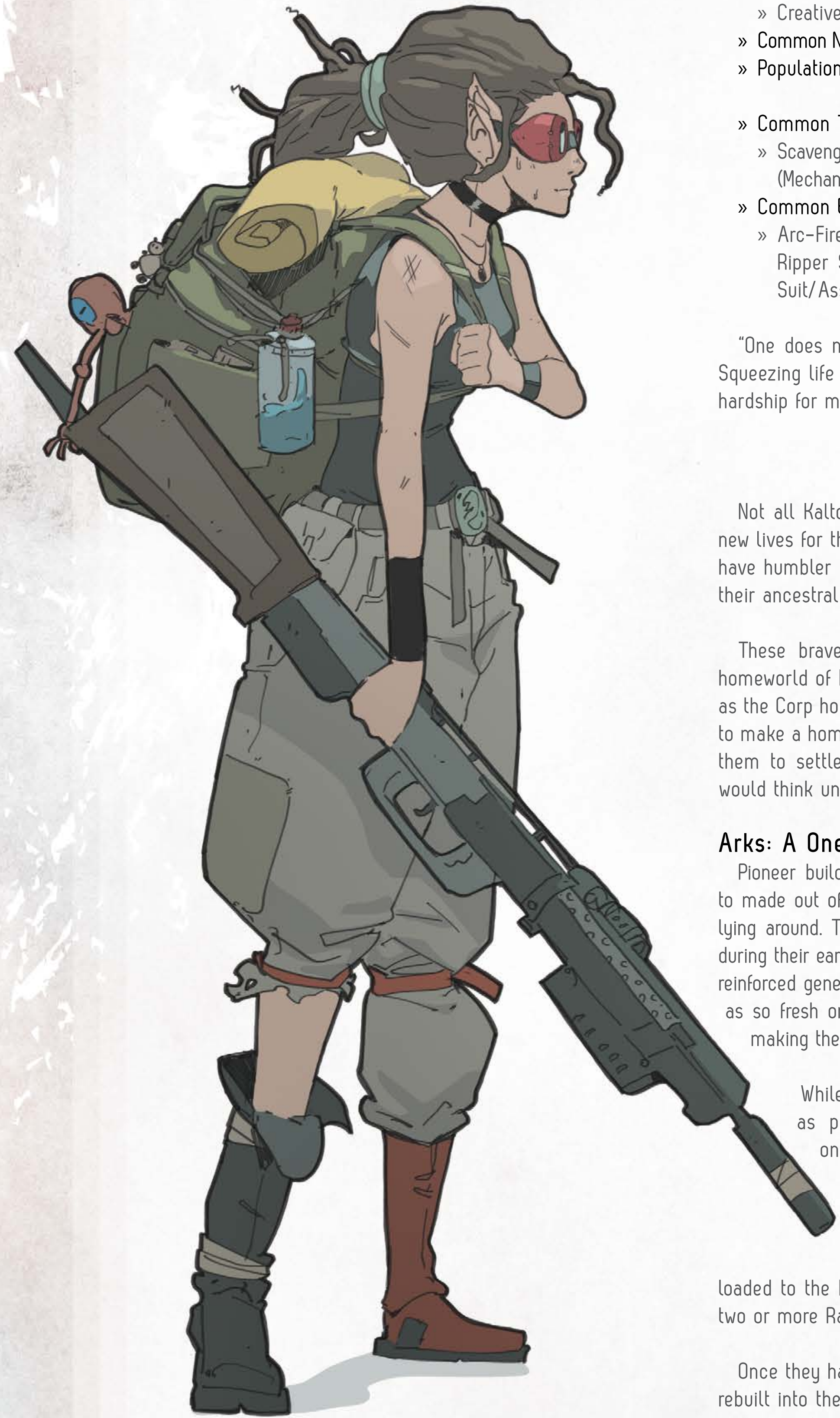
Kaltorans do not need to rely on conventional research for breakthroughs. Via meditation they may access their ancestral memories, which may be used to discover locations and significance. Furthermore, by meditating on an ancient item a Kaltoran may be able to remember how it works or how to fix it. The Filch family is particularly well known for this ability.

Anti-Grav (Weapon & Tool)

While all of the species have access to anti-gravity technology, Kaltorans are the true masters. All of their pit cities are equipped with Aqua Shields which generate huge fields to hold back the sea. Their cut 'n' shut spacecraft are also equipped with these Shields so that they may fly through the oceans of Kadash.

Kaltorans also make widespread use of Grav Webs to move heavy objects, such are rocks from a mine or to land spacecraft within a tight space.

And for personal use a warrior may make use of a Vortex Field to bend gravity, deflecting the projectiles away from the intended target. There are also the famous Kaltoran Grav Gauntlets that allow a skilled melee martial artist to fight at range, or a mechanic to fix a dangerous machine from a safe distance.



Pioneers

- **Common Motivations:** Survival, support family.
- **Common Characteristics:**
  - Creative, friendly, hard working, optimistic, thrifty.
- **Common Names & Family Names:** Same as Rascals, see pg: 84.
- **Population:** 24.97% of Kaltorans.

- **Common Traits:**
  - Scavenger (Resources), Jack of all Trades (Culture), Construction (Mechanics), Agriculture (Planets), Grav Wall (Tactical).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Arc-Fire Bolt/Monomolecular Coil/Irradiated Gun, Grav Ripper Shell, Anti-Grav Arcane/Melee, Functional Tactical Suit/Assault Suit, Grav Belt, Mechanics/Planets Toolbox.

"One does not require travel among the stars to find adventure. Squeezing life from this patch of dirt will be enough adventure and hardship for multiple lifetimes."

– David Wrench,
Mishpacha rancher.

Not all Kaltorans have access to the resources needed to make new lives for themselves as freelancing spacecraft crew. Many more have humbler ambitions of simply living free under an open sky on their ancestral land.

These brave and adaptable Pioneers have set out from their homeworld of Kadash to settle across Haven, Kasuf and even as far as the Corp home system of Var and beyond. Kaltorans have learned to make a home for themselves in the harshest of climates, allowing them to settle dangerous lands and remote asteroids that others would think unlivable.

Arks: A One Way Trip

Pioneer buildings have a 'unique' aesthetic… as they often appear to made out of sheets of rusted scrap metal and whatever junk was lying around. These frontier settlers let little go to waste, especially during their early years when supplies are precious and generations of reinforced genetic memories of scraping by in the pit cities of Kadash as so fresh on their minds. They know they only have one shot at making their new home work, and for most there is no going back.

While most settlers will be transported to their new home as passengers on a Rascal's spacecraft, many board one-way ships that are known as Arks. These are spacecraft with every unnecessary element stripped out, including weapons, shields (but still with simple anti-grav Aqua Shields so they can leave Kadash), all comforts and all additional fuel. They are then loaded to the brim with supplies and people, and then escorted by two or more Rascal vessels to their new home.

Once they have landed, their spacecraft will be disassembled and rebuilt into their new settlement. The ship's bridge will become the community's technical hub, its engines and reactor a power plant, its hull torn down for housing, and its Aqua Shields sent back with its Rascal escorts for another Ark to make use of.

Ancestral Lands & Ruins

Most (but not all) Kaltorans do not feel like Haven should be all theirs because their ancestors once owned it. Better to get on with making the most of life rather than lamenting the fact that others will not adhere to an abstract sense of inheritance that some of them may feel.

While land may be owned, this is only true while it is occupied and defended by that owner. Haven first belonged to unknown Humans – who terraformed its many worlds – and then it was owned by the Archons, who then passed it onto the Kaltorans, who lost it to the Nephilim, who were unable to hold it, and so it is now being claimed piece-by-piece by any who can take it.

The Corporation is particularly happy about this, as they like to claim as much land as they can. But the Kaltorans have little care for these claims unless the Corp are currently occupying that land. Pioneers will often be pushed around as they wish avoid unneccasry fights... but every now and again the Corporation are suddenly suprised by a viscious retaliation when sacred land is threatened.

The Corporation struggles to understand what land is sacred and what land they can push the Kaltorans off. In truth, only a delicate diplomat with strong connections to the Kaltoran people could ever hope to tell what locations are of significance and what ones are not. Be they a beautiful building, ancient meditative hermitage, or the site of a great battle or key historical event. Pioneers could be convinced to give up a great natural resource, or start a bloody war at a moments notice over an oddly shaped ancient rock.

Culture & Progress

Most Pioneer settlements will start around an ancient Kaltoran ruin, such as an old city, space station, or mine. Hunting and gathering (or hydroponics) will often define the first year, followed by farming and mining, and then finally exporting of natural resources to travelling merchants.

Settlements will commonly remain quite small for many years while they find their feet. Once a community has proven the viability of the region, newcomers will quickly flock there, including non-Kaltorans. Those families who established the settlement will not only control the regions primary resources but will also hold special seats of political power. So attractive is this prospect that new settlements are continuously attempted despite the many dangers.

> “Kaltoran Ark ships are a one-way trip. Giant balls of metal with tiny engines, no shields and big dreams.”
> – Nathaniel Filch.

But even when a settlement becomes a city it still maintains that rough Kaltoran look and feel. A sea of buildings made of miss-matching metal sheets, pipes, grates and walkways. A bar on every street corner, and the constant noise of children and machines. Other species will congregate together to create small districts that are a reflection of their own people, but even there the pervasive Kaltoran culture can be found in their food, drink and mannerisms.

It is also of some surprise to many Corporates as to how well their business can go in a Kaltoran city. A wealthy Kaltoran may demand that their hotels look like seedy drug dens on the outside, but secretly on the inside, they want them clean and offering every amenity and luxury. No Kaltoran ever wants to look like they are not as rough and tough as their relatives back on Kadash, no matter how comfortable their life may now be.

Mining

One area of particular success for the Kaltoran economy has been their ability to mine large amounts of valuable ore. The Corporation outnumber their operations four-to-one, and have access to large numbers of automated machines, organic FLESH robots, and regularly bully the Kaltorans around... but still, the Kaltorans outclass them.

While the Corporation strip mine large areas of land and asteroid fields, the Kaltorans use their significant subterranean skills to effectively target the richest regions. Kaltorans are not only expert miners they also make use of their superior anti-gravity technology to filter mined rubble and dust so that no ore goes to waste. Particularly cunning Kaltoran miners have also been known to harvest ores from the fields of dust left behind by large Corp operations.

Corp Synth Steel may be plentiful, but complex machines and advanced technologies are in constant need of rare ores. And with Haven becoming increasingly populated and the Eden Brood Nephilim turning to alternative non-organic technologies, this is a growing market.

Technology

Pioneers rely even more heavily on salvage than other Kaltorans, given that they tend to take the minimum with them as they go to settle their new home. They often live inside the ruins of their ancestors giving them ample access to salvage opportunities for their own use or to sell to travelling merchants. The Legion are particularly fond of trading for salvage with Pioneers, as they are a hospitable people who will often set aside Legion specific salvage for them until they arrive.

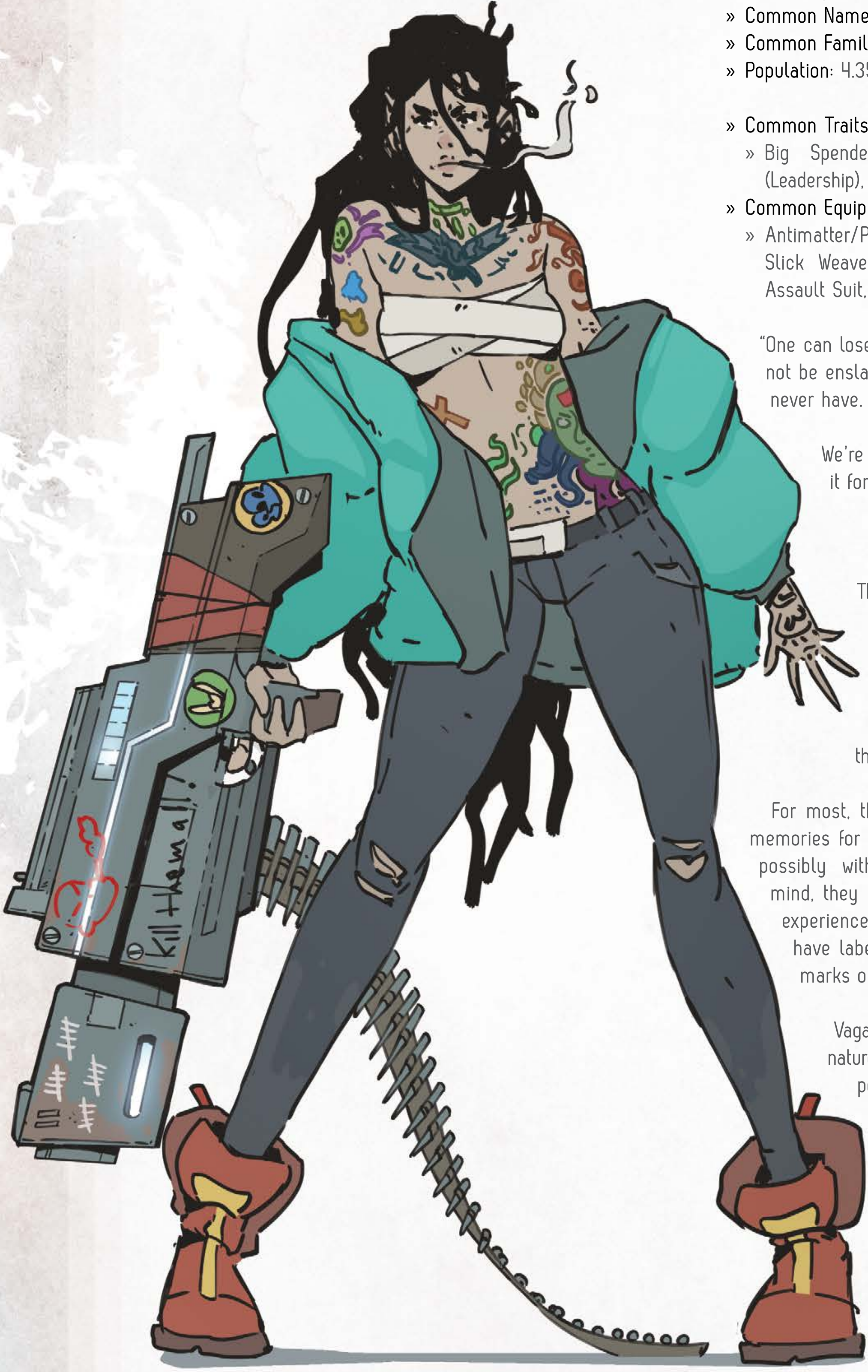
Metal Slugs (Weapon)

These primitive weapons project metal pellets by means of a chemical explosion down a finely machined barrel at high velocity. The shape of the projectile and the types of chemicals vary with the creator. Such weapons saw very little use during the Great War, but they have become incredibly popular with settlers in remote locations as they are easy to construct with limited resources and require no electricity.

Vagabonds

- **Common Motivation:** Intense experiences.
- **Common Characteristics:**
  - Cunning, driven, intense, opportunistic, selfish.
- **Common Names:** Same as Rascals, see pg: 84.
- **Common Family Names:** Bone, Burn, Embrace, Fuse, Jinx.
- **Population:** 4.35% of Kaltorans.

- **Common Traits:**
  - Big Spender (Resources), Addicted (Focus), Boastful (Leadership), Executioner (Stealth), Annihilate (Heavy Arms).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Antimatter/Plasma Gun, Brute Companion, Arc-Fire Melee, Slick Weave/Chameleon Durable Clothing, Force Bubble Assault Suit, Stims, Ammo Pack, ARK Power Coil.


kill them all!

"One can lose their life living for the past or the future. I will not be enslaved by my ancestors or the children that I may never have.

We're only given one life, and you're a fool to not take it for all that it can give."

– Joanna Bone,
Vagabond pirate.

Those Kaltorans who are exploring the depths of space and new worlds, or working any freelance gig they can get, are all united by a desire to create new and better memories for themselves. Their genetic memories from the Years of Darkness weigh heavily upon them, tainting their thoughts and dreams with horrors and suffering.

For most, this darkness motivates them to create positive memories for themselves and their future children. For some, possibly with too many dark thoughts or weakness of mind, they opt to drench the darkness in new and intense experiences as a means of dulling their pain. The Legion have labelled these Kaltorans as Vagabonds, a title that marks one out as potentially dangerous.

Vagabonds are known for their wild and impulsive natures. They live lives on the edge and prefer densely populated locations where one is less tempted to spend time alone in one's own company. Many Kaltoran parents see this as youthful exuberance and a lack of practice at self-control, a phase that they will move on from.

While this is true for many, it is not true for all. Those Kaltorans who only learn how to numb their dark thoughts through intensity and novelty will often be doomed to an unsustainable lifestyle that will see them to an early grave or an embrace of the darkness within.

Anti-Culture

Vagabonds do not fit well into non-Vagabond Kaltoran societies. They do not see family as the cornerstone of life, though they highly value companionship. They reject the Kaltorans many festivals and rituals. They do not dress in the rugged browns and greys that so many Kaltorans do, instead they often wear a mixture of non-Kaltoran clothing styles.

Feeling judged and watched by the Kaltorans on Kadash the Vagabonds will often find themselves pushed towards underworld circles and the other species. In fact, Vagabonds are often very well-travelled, picking up cultural traits from all they visit as they attempt to indulge in every custom.

This inter-species-trotting trait may be looked down upon by traditionalist Kaltorans, but it is often admired by others. Many a Vagabond has found acceptance by their kin through the sharing of wild tales and exotic trinkets from foreign lands. These Vagabonds are the lucky ones, as this acceptance often leads them to find an inner balance within themselves and a path away from criminals.

Piracy, Debauchery & Cannibalism

Most Vagabonds will at some point in their life turn to crime. For many this is born of desperation, for others unsatiable greed, but for most it is the allure of a new and intense experience. While most of these crimes will be minor in nature, more than a few Vagabonds will turn to piracy… especially as against the Nephilim and the Corporation.

The first to leave Kadash after the Years of Darkness and to interact with the other species were the Vagabonds. Unruly Kaltorans who already felt unwanted by their own people and who were unable to numb their pain. Chief among these were the Embrace family who plundered unprotected Corporate merchant ships and took control of the broken Batah space station around Mishpacha.

More grounded Kaltorans soon followed and drove away the Embrace family and the pirates, but not before the Vagabonds left a permanent negative first impression on the Corporation. An impression that is regularly reinforced by Vagabond piracy and cruelty.

Vagabond pirates regularly enjoy a life free from their inner darkness for a short time, as a life of piracy is exciting and often comes with wealth. But this lifestyle soon leads to greater evils as they have unwittingly fed the beast within. It is only a matter of time before they revert to their Dark Tribe roots and partake in cannibalism, slavery and all measures of evil.

Ironically, those Vagabonds who fall to their inner evil have become what they were running away from. Some fall so far that they have effectively become Dark Tribesmen in a spacecraft. Living only with a trusted few Kaltorans crewmates, destroying all non-essential ship lights, regularly performing ancient rituals to their ancestors, and making extensive use of bait, boarding and melee tactics.

“

Kaltoran culture has always been strongly focused around family and cultivating genetic memories. The ancient pre-war Kaltorans were an obedient, clean and hyper-precise society, with a wide range of procedures and traditions for selecting partners to produce ideal offspring. We modern Kaltorans are grubby, ceaselessly belligerent and rebellious, but still placing a huge emphasise on selecting partners with the correct memories.

Ancient Kaltoran society was carefully balanced and increasingly fine-tuned with each passing generation. They were incredibly valuable to the Unending Archon faction that ruled them as they not only produced vast resources, they also created exceptional technical and scientific staff for their laboratories. But their society was fragile, suffering a great decline with the onset of the Fractured Age and crumbling under the Nephilim during the Great War.

Modern Kaltoran society is incredibly flexible, adaptable and durable, traits that were all necessary to survive our Years of Darkness. We do not have the high-production capabilities of our ancestors, but we also don't have their fragility.

With each passing year I worry that we are slowly being pulled back to our ancient ways. Relative peace is shifting our priorities back to maximisation and efficiency. Or – like the so-called vagabonds – we are rejecting all wisdom and living only for ourselves and the now as a way of shutting out the pain of the past and the dangers of the future.

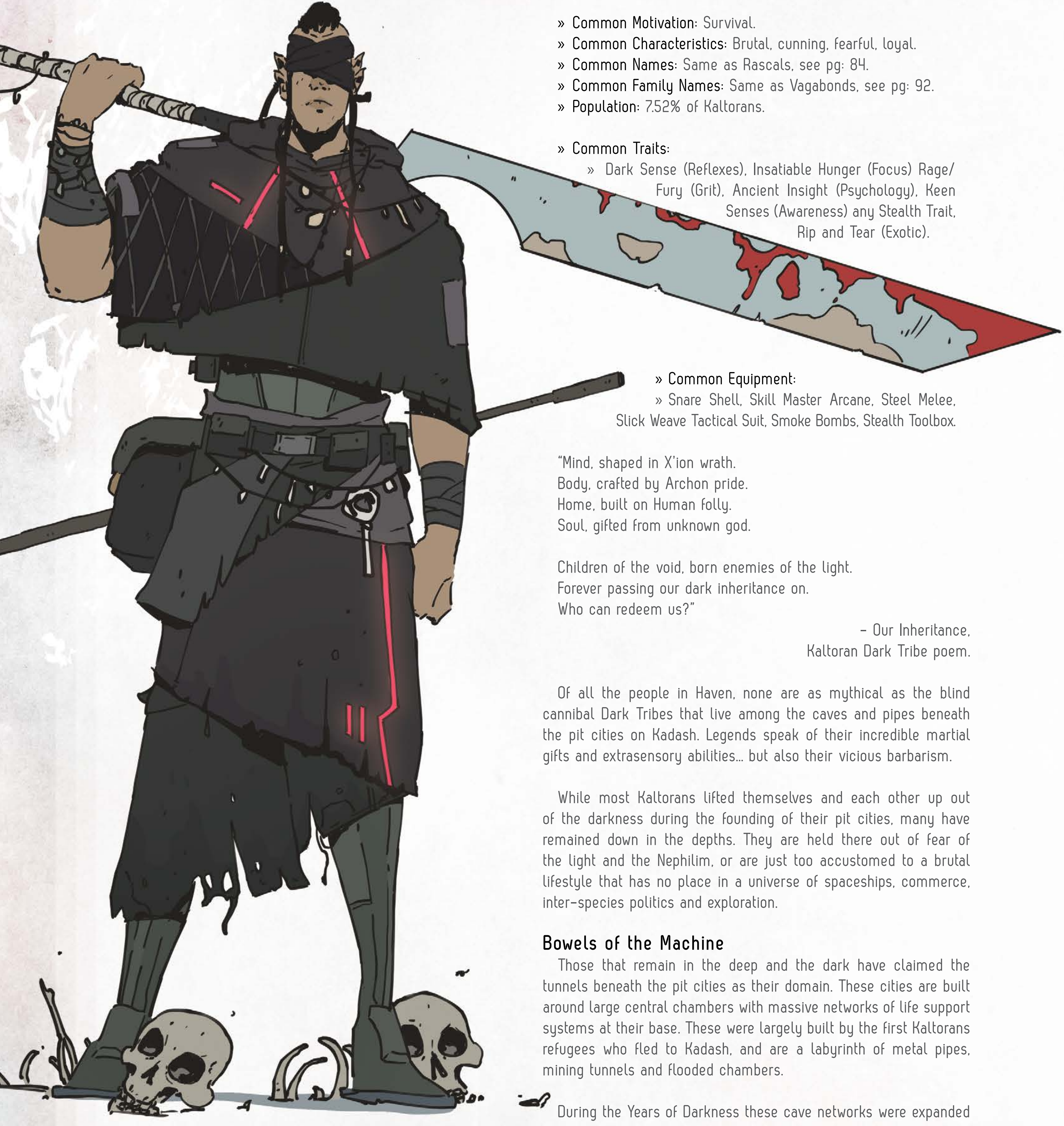
Another great blow will come to our new society, and if we are to weather it we must be ready to strike it in the face and bend to absorb its blows. We must reject the blindness of the vagabonds who only see the now, and the clawing pull of the watchers who fixate on the past.

– Tobias Filch.

Technology

Vagabonds are well-known for their eclectic cultural natures, but this also extends to their equipment. They live violent lives on the edges of society and have learned to take every opportunity to gain an advantage. There is no such thing as honour to most Vagabonds, and they will take the best that each species has to offer.

A successful Vagabond will often have Nephilim augmentations, a Legion heavy gun, shielded Corp clothing and Palantor tools. While they enjoy Twi-Far art and Remnant healing services, they rarely make use of their specialised technologies.



Dark Tribes

- **Common Motivation:** Survival.
- **Common Characteristics:** Brutal, cunning, fearful, loyal.
- **Common Names:** Same as Rascals, see pg: 84.
- **Common Family Names:** Same as Vagabonds, see pg: 92.
- **Population:** 7.52% of Kaltorans.

- **Common Traits:**
  - Dark Sense (Reflexes), Insatiable Hunger (Focus) Rage/ Fury (Grit), Ancient Insight (Psychology), Keen Senses (Awareness) any Stealth Trait, Rip and Tear (Exotic).

- **Common Equipment:**
  - Snare Shell, Skill Master Arcane, Steel Melee, Slick Weave Tactical Suit, Smoke Bombs, Stealth Toolbox.

"Mind, shaped in X'ion wrath.
Body, crafted by Archon pride.
Home, built on Human folly.
Soul, gifted from unknown god.

Children of the void, born enemies of the light.
Forever passing our dark inheritance on.
Who can redeem us?"

– Our Inheritance,
Kaltoran Dark Tribe poem.

Of all the people in Haven, none are as mythical as the blind cannibal Dark Tribes that live among the caves and pipes beneath the pit cities on Kadash. Legends speak of their incredible martial gifts and extrasensory abilities... but also their vicious barbarism.

While most Kaltorans lifted themselves and each other up out of the darkness during the founding of their pit cities, many have remained down in the depths. They are held there out of fear of the light and the Nephilim, or are just too accustomed to a brutal lifestyle that has no place in a universe of spaceships, commerce, inter-species politics and exploration.

Bowels of the Machine

Those that remain in the deep and the dark have claimed the tunnels beneath the pit cities as their domain. These cities are built around large central chambers with massive networks of life support systems at their base. These were largely built by the first Kaltorans refugees who fled to Kadash, and are a labyrinth of metal pipes, mining tunnels and flooded chambers.

During the Years of Darkness these cave networks were expanded as Kaltorans unsuccessfully sought to carve out a place of safety for themselves. Their rocks were stained with the blood of many wars, and the bones of many generations can still be found down there.

The Dark Tribes that live in those tunnels no longer have the need to dig, as there is copious space. But as food is scarce, hunting parties are almost always on the move to attack other tribes or those from the pit cities who travel down to their domain to maintain the great machines.

Small & Elite

Most Dark Tribes are small, as food is scarce and dominance of a region often comes through skill and brutality over numbers. A typical tribe consists of four families with twelve breeding couples and two hunting groups. The social structures of each tribe varies, but are always led by the most skilled warrior who is known as the Bere Melech. In civilized Kaltoran society the word 'Melech' is synonymous with 'tyrant' and is often used as a general curse word. Older and wounded members of the tribe are only allowed to live if they have technical skills that are of service to the tribe.

Hunters will often be led by their Bere Melech (a Melech who does not hunt with their warriors will quickly lose control of the tribe) and have a preference for traps and ambushes. A hunting group may be away from their tribe for months at a time as they will not return without food, and opportunities are scarce.

Keen non-Visual Senses

Along with their unique minds the Archons also gifted the Kaltorans with very keen senses, of which the Dark Tribes are the true masters. Nearly all Dark Tribesmen are blind, having seen no light for their entire lives or having subjected themselves to ritual mutilation. Their keen ears are able to distinguish between the subtlest of sounds with precise precision, especially within an environment they are familiar with.

Dark Tribesmen are almost undefeatable in their own territory as they have spent years learning the feel and sound of every rock, water pool, secret tunnel and rusty pipe. An expert warrior can move among their enemies without a sound, shoot a target over 50 metres away and precisely locate foes by their breathing and heartbeats.

But many of these fancy skills are of little benefit against foes that will happily make use of light. To fight these non-Dark Tribe enemies the tribesmen will make widespread use of sensory deprivation tools such as smoke bombs. Even non-Dark Tribe Kaltorans will find these tools useful against non-Kaltorans.

> "The Great War and the Years of Darkness are a black vortex in our mind. Pulling us towards fear, despair and desperation. Let us help those still in its grasp, they are where we were, and where we may yet return."
>
> – Amos Swagger.

A Dying People

While their exact numbers are unknown, it is in little doubt that they are a people in decline. With their continual feeding on each other and the scarcity of alternative food sources, many are forced to move closer to the pit cities, which often results in clashes with city residents and occasionally other tribes.

Some Dark Tribesmen are keen to leave their current life but lack the willpower to step into the light. Moved by a desire for their children to have a better future they will smuggle their newborns into the lower levels just beneath the pit cities so that they may be adopted. While some of these children die before they are found, many more are located by brave Kaltorans who journey down into the dark to find these crying babes and adopt them into their family. Most famous of these brave families are the Swaggers.

The Clank of Time

While the Dark Tribes have genetic memories that tell them of months, weeks and days measured by solar movements, they prefer to track time according to the rhythmic noises of the giant machines that they live among. This is a tradition that is maintained by many Kaltorans, especially those that live in pit cities or on a spaceship. While this method of measuring time may not be as precise as solar movements, it intimately ties a person to their mechanical environment and lets them know when things are going well or are about to break. This tradition has contributed to Kaltoran's reputations as excellent spacecraft mechanics.

Technology

With a lack of sight and readily available power, many Dark Tribes have been forced to limit the range of technologies that they can make use of. Ironically this has also resulted in some of the deepest tribes holding impressive and unused technological wonders that were hidden in their caves during the Kaltorans first years on Kadash. While a few large combat forces have been able to push their way into these deep caves, they have often returned with only a few survivors, and not always with a prize.

Kaltorans are famous for their ability to meditate back to a time before the Great War to gain access to secret technologies. But they must be careful to not fall for the horrors of the Dark Tribes. Many a Kaltoran has inadvertently reverted to their ancestor's brutal age by becoming trapped in their dark genetic memories. Some have fallen so far as to effectively become Dark Tribesmen themselves.

Slick Weave

An ancient form of mixed-material armour that was a popular choice for non-front line combatants before the Great War, and perfected by the blind elderly Dark Tribe weavers. Traditional Dark Tribe slick weave is built upon a carbon hex mesh that disperses pressure across the body and is interlaced with textured aramid and polyethylene fibres, along with blood-soaked hair from slain enemies. Contemporary slick weave usually makes use of smooth Corp-made Synthweave and energy shield nodes.

Families

When two Kaltorans marry they will choose which of their family tribes to join, taking that families name as their own. This choice will often be for economic and political reasons, which has resulted in power centralizing around several large tribes. But those coming into a new family are not alienated from their old, the two are often brought closer by the union.

Embrace

Millions perished to starvation and brutality during the Years of Darkness, and only those Kaltorans who were willing to do the unthinkable were able to survive. The Embrace family of the Yasha pit city were amongst the last of the great Kaltoran families to accept this harsh truth. Unwilling to do what was necessary, they fell prey to the many cannibalistic raiders and sicknesses that spread throughout their crumbling pit city. Finally, reduced to their last members, the family's sanity broke. Strengthening themselves on the flesh of their own children, they struck back at their murderous neighbours. Against all the odds, they survived, and have come to be defined by that singular brutal event.

The Embrace family were quick to leave Kadash during the first years of the Kaltorans' re-emergence to the stars. They saw opportunity and revelled in the chaos of the great unknown, murdering hundreds of Corporates and Nephilim before other Kaltorans could push them out of their newly claimed **Batah Gate** space station around the planet Mishpacha.

Filch

This large family of engineers was instrumental in the formation of the beautiful Carcho pit city, and had many children with the Mind Keeper priests and priestesses of its large temple over the Years of Darkness. In current times they have become renown for their ability to guide other Kaltorans in meditation to safely access ancient genetic memories. But some Filch family members have delved too deep, and have come back as a different person, unable to distinguish between their memories and those of their ancestors.

Gearthumper

Once a great family, the declining Gearthumpers have become fragmented into three factions after multiple economic setbacks. The heavily augmented **Daniel** maintains the family's ancestral tavern – The Thirsty Gear – in the pit city of Mayim on Kadash, anti-gravity engineer **Ruth** rules the family's mining interests in the Liberty Belt, and the bio-chemist **Peter** was last seen on the muddy world of Dashara in the Kasuf system fighting off Legion bounty hunters.

ARK Foundings blames the Gearthumpers for the chemical terrorist attack on Alabaster Three, and is constantly trying to goad the family into making an open move against them so that they may strike back and push them out of the Liberty Belt. If the Gearthumpers are to prosper again they will need to reunite and find allies against ARK.

Jinx

A wild people from the pit city of Yasha, the Jinx family appear to be determined to not fit in and always walk the unfamiliar path. They are the quintessential Vagabonds, and have all moved off Kadash to explore other cultures and distant worlds.

The Jinx are not fond of meditation, tradition or dwelling on the past, as they believe the best way forward for the Kaltoran people is to create new and exciting memories for themselves. This attitude has put them at odds with many Kaltorans and especially the Swagger family as they believe the remaining Dark Tribes should be left to their fate. They have also found themselves at odds with the Embrace family who they see as monsters, the arrogant self-righteous Vibe family and the boring Filch family. Those they tend to like the most are often non-Kaltorans.

Vibe

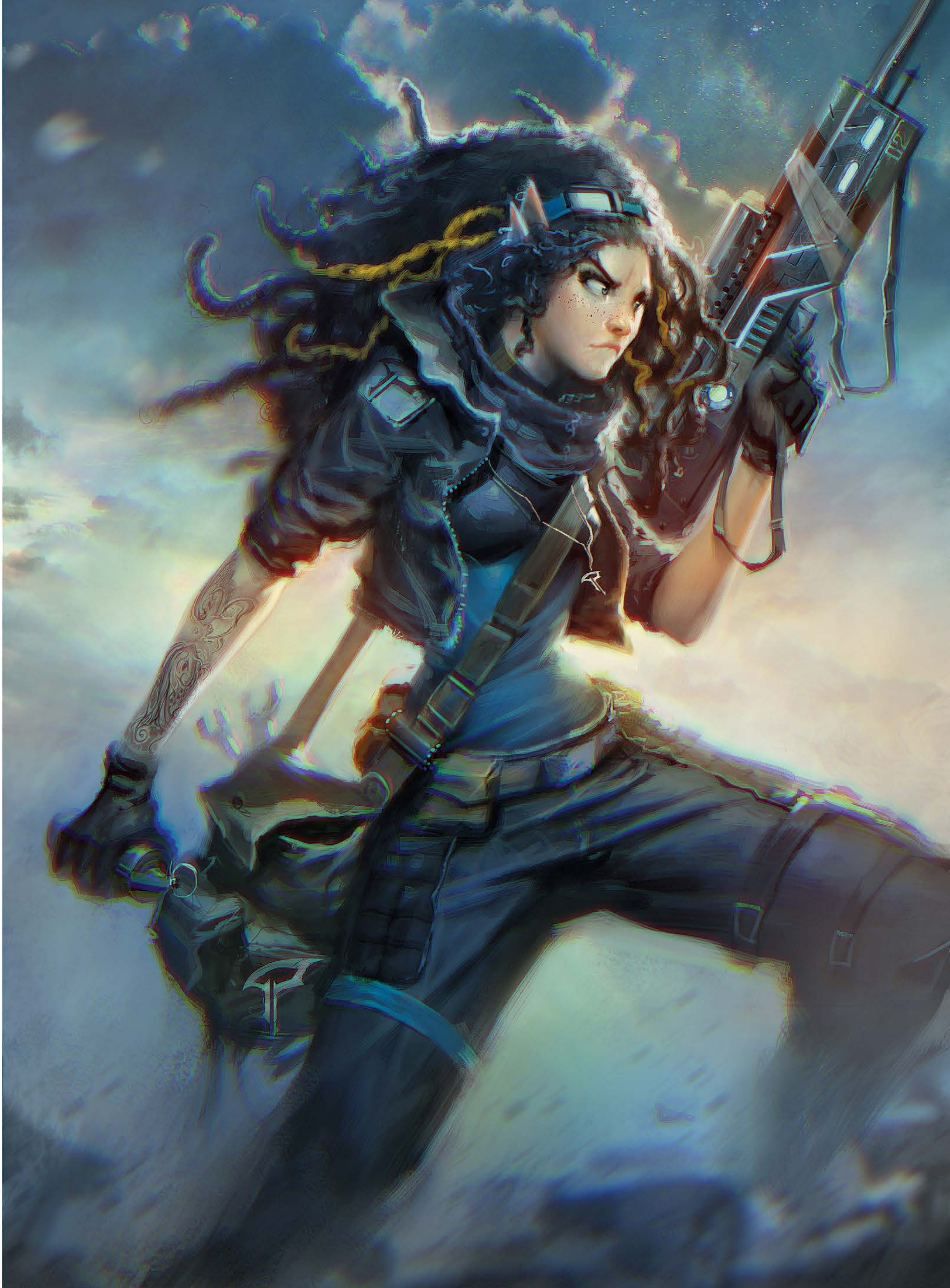
The moderately sized but influential Vibe family were the first to leave the Years of Darkness in their pit city of Selepp. They did this by securing the waterlogged remains of an ancient Kaltoran military frigate and plundering it for its technology. They were also among the first Kaltorans to return to the stars. It was the Vibe family that negotiated with the Corp and Eden Brood Nephilim (and later the Legion) to see the cannibalistic Embrace family as an anomaly and not as a reflection of all Kaltorans.

The Vibe family has access to some of the few non-cut-and-shut Kaltoran spacecraft, making them a force to be reckoned with and the unofficial military branch of the Kaltoran people. The Corp are growing increasingly cautious of the Vibe family as they have a close relationship with the Legion and are gathering resources that could be used to form a Kaltoran army out of the ancient frigates that sit on the ocean floor alongside their pit city. Tensions are high as there was recently an assassination attempt on the Vibe family patriarch **Amos Vibe**, but some suspect rival Kaltoran families or the Eden Brood Nephilim.

Swagger

The growing Swagger family from the pit city of Yasha are well-known for their tireless work to bring Dark Tribes people into the light. They do this by sending negotiation teams down to the lower depth of their city and the pit city of New Eden, with gifts of food and to collected abandoned Dark Tribe babies to be adopted into their family.

While down in the depths they also work to repair and maintain the life support systems of their pit city and map the Dark Tribe tunnels. Many of these expeditions result in violence, and some have resulted in the discovery of caches of lost technology. All of this has combined to make Swagger a very diverse tribe with a wide range of skills, assets and bloodlines.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Do YOU have th
STRENGTH
to be a
FARMER?
HAVE A BAB
FOR
CTORY!

Legion

- **Creator:** Archons (Triumvirate faction).
- **Average Height:** 2.15m
- **Average Life Span:** 52 (65 natural) years.
- **Population:** 36 million.
- **Principle Settlements:**
  - Lilith (Haven), Orotalt moon: Jamila (Kasuf), Cerberus Prime (Cerberus).
- **Government:** Military dictatorship (Casila Curia).
- **Primary Exports:** Enforcement (Corporation, Palantor), munitions.
- **Primary Imports:** Fuel (Corporation), food (Kaltoran), small goods (Corporation), spacecraft salvage (Kaltoran, Twi-Far).

- **Common Allies:** Corporation, Kaltorans.
- **Common Rivals:** Nephilim, Remnant.

"We did not lose the war, but we are losing ourselves. Can we ever hope to be more than a servile warrior people who die for uncaring masters?"

– Hieronymus Domina,
2nd Interior Centurion.

The Legion have a short and violent history, punctuated by grit and steadfastness against insurmountable odds. When the Nephilim invaded their empire the Archons knew they were in need of an army, and forced the Triumvirate faction to remake their newest species, the Legion, to become this army.

We know little of these proto-Legion or where their homeworld lies, but it is known that they were a docile people that had just left the lab stage of their creation. The Archons hastily reworked their genes to turn them into a warrior-species with increased muscle, toughness and size, alongside an altering of their minds to favour organisation and combat.

Gene weaving labs were refitted by Kaltoran technicians to produce Legion at a thousand times their standard rate. Within just a few months the Archons had created their army, but with no experience of warfare they turned to Human history to create their military culture.

Throughout the war, the Legion fought for all of the Archon factions and alongside many of their creations, especially the Kaltorans. While they fought well, they and their equipment were expensive to mass-produce and they lacked the ability to achieve victory over the Nephilim's scientific creativity and numbers. After just two years Legion production was halted as the fragmented Archons had turned to more desperate and unconventional methods, such as the disastrous Mechonids, and the world-destroying Zhou.

The remaining Legion fought on, even after the final Archon had been killed and the X'ion had left. For twenty-five more years they battled the displaced Nephilim with minimal supplies and guerilla tactics.

As resources declined it became apparent that if the Legion were to survive as a species they would need to procreate and form a stable society for themselves. They found an arctic planet that was defensible and suited their physiology, naming it Cerberus Prime: the watchdog of hell. This was fitting, as their new purpose would be to protect the survivors from the hell created in the wake of the Great War. As the fleet had used most of its remaining fuel to colonize this planet, it would become the Legion's permanent settlement.

The Legion struggled to raise families and become arctic farmers, as there was nothing more contrary to their nature. In response to their growing economic needs the Interior Branch of the military was created to manage these non-combat activities.

For seventy long years the Legion grew to assume that they were all that remained of the Archon's creations, then unexpectedly a long-range scout made contact with the Corporation in the Haven system. This first contact created chaos within their society, and the Legion commanders (known as the Casila Curia) struggled to relate to these new outsiders. Their narcissistic culture was alien, their species were in no Legion records and worst of all... they worked alongside Nephilim.

Mere weeks after their first meeting, Corporate executives began offering mercenary jobs to the Legion. Over the course of that first year, almost two million Legion deserted Cerberus Prime to join the Corporation. Scrambling to control the situation the Casila Curia issued an edict that all deserters could never return to Cerberus Prime and labelled them Exilia, exiled soldiers.

This would grow to be a very unpopular move, as many families had been lifted from poverty due to the resources sent back home by the Exilia. In response, the government formed a Foreign Branch along with a new army of official Legion mercenaries, the Auxilia. Additionally, it was decided that Exilia would be absolved of their crimes if they enlisted in the Auxilia.

As a base for the Auxilia army and to encourage the Exilia to re-join the Legion fold, a colony was formed in the Haven system on the arctic planet Lilith using their newfound Corp wealth. This colony was commanded by the famous Athena 'Lady Vengence' Kosta.

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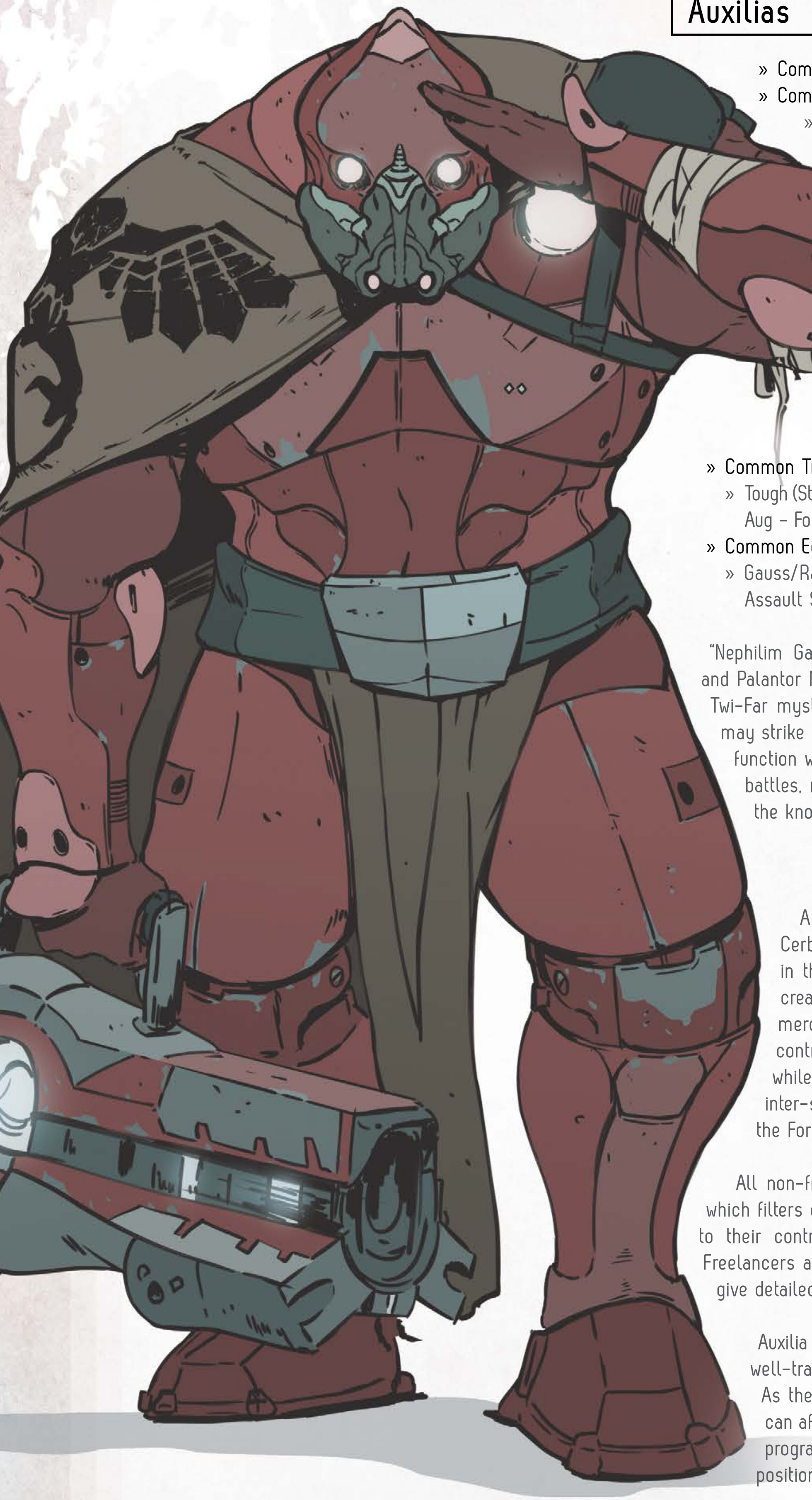
While it is true that the Legion are enjoying greater prosperity than they have ever had, it is at a cost. Mercenary life is dangerous and does not pay particularly well. Also, many are worried that their people are doomed to forever be the warrior-servants for another species. These concerns have prompted the Casila Curia to attempt to curb mercenary work, but this has only increased the number of Exilia.

The Legion get along well with most species, as despite their proclivities towards combat they are a friendly and reasonable people. Though they do struggle with the monstrous Nephilim and their Emissaries, along with the traitorous Remnant and their All-Monk missionaries.



Auxilias

- **Common Motivations:** Social and economic security.
- **Common Characteristics:**
    - Focused, honourable, loyal, organised, protective, proud, stubborn.
- **Common Names:**
    - Ajax (m), Aurora (f), Brisa (f), Cassandra (f), Cronus (m), Eris (f), Hector (m), Janus (m), Mars (m), Medea (f), Selene (f), Vulcan (m).
- **Common Family Names:**
    - Augustus, Brutus, Casca, Crassus, Lepidus, Scaevola, Vespillo.
- **Population:** 22.82% of Legion.

- **Common Traits:**
    - Tough (Strength), Presence (Leadership), Warrior Class (Culture), Aug - Fortitude (Physical), Shell Shock (Heavy Arms).
- **Common Equipment:**
    - Gauss/Rail Gun, Shrapnel/Kinetic Shell, Tungsten Carbide Assault Suit, Ammo Pack, Multispectral Visor Sensor.

"Nephilim Gargantuans and Oni may be larger, Corp spec-ops and Palantor MVPs may be better equipped, Remnant zealots and Twi-Far mystics may wield pagan magics, Kaltoran Dark Tribes may strike with unparalleled brutality and Mechonid robots may function with perfect fearless obedience. Such things only win battles, not wars. Armies win wars and ours is the finest in the known galaxy."

- Consul Tiberius Valeria,
ordination ceremony of Consul Athena Kosta.

After the unpopular marking of Legion who had left Cerberus Prime to work as self-employed mercenaries in the Haven system as Exilia traitors, the Casila Curia created the Foreign Branch and the authorized Auxilia mercenaries. Most Auxilia mercenaries work Corporate contracts under a Decanus or Centurion commander, while a tiny number work as freelancers to build inter-species connections and to find new opportunities for the Foreign Branch.

All non-freelancer pay goes directly to the Foreign Branch, which filters down to the Auxilia as wages (with bonus' according to their contributions) and a small income for their families. Freelancers are responsible for their own pay, but are required to give detailed reports on all of their activities.

Auxilia mercenaries are a tough, well-supplied and well-trained fighting force, the best of the best of the Legion. As the Foreign Branch has no shortage of applicants they can afford to have very high standards and a brutal training program. Those who are unable to find an Auxilia combat position may be directed towards a specialist support role.

Auxilia are a proud and honourable people who understand that they occupy a place of privilege within Legion culture. However, the hardships of constant conflict can weigh heavily upon them, making their veterans grouchy and cynical.

Bunks & Barracks

The daily life of a non-freelance Auxilia is one of routine. Regular sleep hours in cramped quarters, intense morning exercise, short showers, large meals, scrutinised time in the gun range, afternoon academic studies (on technical skills, combat tactics, military/civil philosophy, upcoming deployment ops, etc…) or wargames, and a small amount of evening free time.

Monthly shore leave and bi-annual returns to Cerberus Prime are precious to an Auxilia, where they are often spent with friends and family if they are available, or in Corp gambling halls and Kaltoran pubs if they are not.

Casila Curia & Branches

Legion society is a military dictatorship with a semi-planned economy, in which all society is governed by a strict hierarchy of ranks. The governing Casila Curia is led by four Consuls, the highest-ranked officer from each branch.

Prime

Led by the venerable **Tiberius Valeria**, the Prime Branch is responsible for maintaining an elite black-clad standing **Hoplon** army that defends the Cerberus system and all major Legion settlements, such as those on Lilith in Haven and the moon Jamila around the planet Orotalt in the Kasuf system.

While modern Hoplon forces are typically recruited from the ranks of the Auxilia, historically they were selected at a very young age from powerful Legion families and put through a decade-long program in dedicated Hoplon schools. These prestigious schools are still in operation, but no longer exclusively serve the Prime Branch.

Operations

Led by the cunning and feared **Selene Lulia**, the Operations Branch is responsible for research, secret operations, long-distance scouting, scientific research, intelligence-gathering and the policing of the other branches.

The trench-coated **Vulpe** detectives of the Operation Branch are feared by all Legion, as they are empowered to interpret the law as they will and hand out immediate judgement. Only those with the rank of Tribune or greater may challenge their authority or deny them any requested resources.

Interior

Led by the stern **Brutus Servilla**, the Interior Branch is responsible for all domestic activities, such as farming, mining, homemaking and production-focused colonies.

Foreign

Led by the admired **Athena "Lady Vengeance" Kosta**, the Foreign Branch is responsible for inter-species mercenary contracts, diplomacy and trade.

Rank Tiers

- **Consul** commands a Branch of the Military.
- **Imperator** commands an army of 100,000.
- **Legate** commands a legion of 10,000.
- **Tribune** commands a cohort of 1,000.
- **Centurion** commands a centuria of 100.
- **Decanus** commands a contingent of 10.
- **Citizen**, tier one.
- **Citizen**, tier two.
- **Citizen**, tier three, recruit.
- **Citizen**, no tier, youth.
- **Dishonourably discharged**, stripped of all rank, criminal.

Legion are awarded ranks and medals of honour by commanding officers for their service to the Legion people. Award ceremonies are an almost weekly event in major Legion settlements, and are often coupled with political speeches, birth announcements and followed by a celebration.

Duration of service can be used to attain the rank of Citizen tier two. while education or outstanding service are required for Citizen tier one to Centurion. The rank of Tribune requires exceptional service and a display of unique skill, and is the highest rank that still requires regular fieldwork.

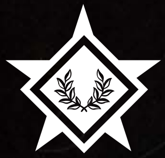
The rank of Legate requires strong political support, while the powerful position of Imperator is directly appointed by a branch Consul. Political shifts or displays of failure can often end the career aspirations of a Legate or Imperator and has resulted in a number of high-ranked Legion occupying trivial positions on remote colonies while they wait for political winds to change. Branch Consuls are appointed by retiring Consuls, and all Consuls are required to maintain a succession plan in the event of their unexpected death.

Parents who have raised (and not just birthed) at least two – non-Exilia, non-dishonourably discharged – children are given special honour, and are considered higher in authority than those of equal rank. This parental honour rule has caused some controversy following the creation of the Foreign Branch, as it has expanded the Casila Curia to an even number of four members, giving an edge to the voting powers of Operations Consul Selene Lulia and Interior Consul Brutus Servilla who both have multiple children (though two of Lulia's four children have gone Exilia).

No freelancer has ever gained a rank above Decanus while maintaining their freelancer assignment, though it is technically possible. Dishonourably discharged criminals may only regain a place within society through promotion within the Interior Branch.

Legion Insignias

Branch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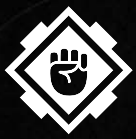
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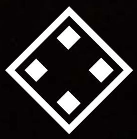
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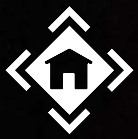
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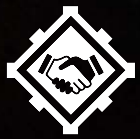
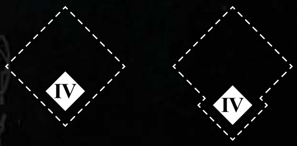
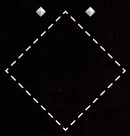
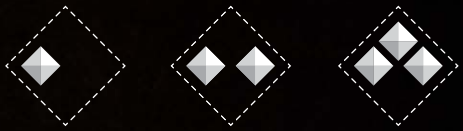

Foreign

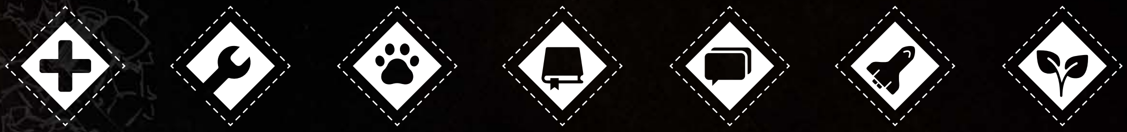
Ranks

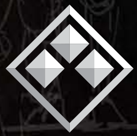


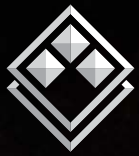
Regiment


Parent


Citizen


Specialist


Decanus (10)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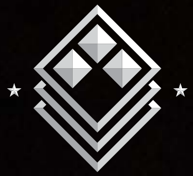
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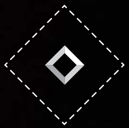
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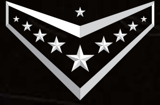
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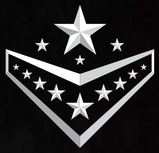
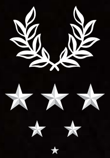
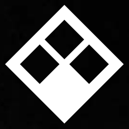

Imperator (100k)


Consul (Branch)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(Inverted Colours)

Language: Legion & Hand Signals

The spoken Legion language shares many similarities with the Archon language, but where Archon's linguistic specificity was directed towards scientific and technical descriptions, the Legion language has an obvious leaning towards military and tactical jargon. Elaborate and verbose when needed, it is rarely poetic or figurative, favouring practicalities. It can quickly convey complex directions, especially in relation to weapons, tactics and training.

One of the main features differentiating Legion from other dialects is that it features an entire sub-language based on elaborate hand signals. Created for operational use, this short-form sign language is flexible and able to change its code structure mid-combat. This makes it almost impossible for opponents to understand what is being communicated, even if they are fluent in Legion.

Technology

During the Great War the Legion's equipment was supplied by the Archon's supporting nations. Over the past century the Operations Branch has reverse-engineered many of these technologies – including the Legion's iconic Apollo gauss assault rifle and Praetorian armour – but have not yet been able to reproduce their spacecraft.

Animal Bots

During the early years of the War the Legion were supplied with a number of unnecessarily ornate robots that resembled the form of animals and insects. Iconic Eagle Bots that could scout and act as communication relays, Wasp Bots that could hack networks unaided, and beast-shaped melee combat bots.

These bots quickly became rare and were replaced by plain – and easier to manufacture – counterparts. Ornate bots morphed into a status symbol of power that are particularly popular with Legion commanders.

Gauss (Weapon)

The Legion's most popular weapon, much loved for its fast rate of fire and cheap munitions. By applying a sequenced current through conductive coils wrapped around a barrel, these weapons generate an electromagnetic field that can have its polarity shifted to smoothly fire a string of plain tungsten carbide tipped spinning rounds.

Rail (Weapon)

The Legion's heavy weapon of choice. Three electromagnetic rails run down the sides of this weapon's barrel. When charged, they can project a tungsten carbide tipped round at supersonic speed with limited recoil.

Tungsten Carbide

Legion high command insists on manufacturing their iconic Praetorian tungsten carbide armour even though it is a large drain on the Legion economy. Still unable to produce enough for everyone, most Praetorian armour is handed down within a family, often patched with alternative components that do not have the full durability or appearance of the original.

"They're tough and skilled warriors who are in need of what we are selling, and it is only a matter of time before they are fully assimilated into our economy and culture… then we can finally bypass their so-called 'Foreign Branch' and drive their pay down to its true market value."

– Conroy "Double Tap" Body,
Corporate CEO of the Body Count Conglomerate.

"Yea, I like them funny brutes. They're a stubborn but honest people with real potential. The longer they stay connected to the Corp at the pocketbook however, the more they will succumb to their darker nature."

– Daniel Vibe,
Kaltoran smuggler.

"Ignorant apes with bad genes. They will not last.

Though we must be cautious, for they lack the mental strength and clarity of mind to see past their ignorant prejudices. We must treat them like wild beasts and not foolishly corner them."

– Omnious Claw,
Nephilim advisor to the Devwi-Ich.

"Are we forever doomed to be the servile warriors for another species you ask? No, we're only doing what is needed to gain a footing for ourselves in this new galaxy.

We are proud of our history and what we have achieved. We know we must be more than warriors, and we have the strength of purpose to achieve this goal, no matter how long it takes."

– Horatia Aetos,
Legion Decanus, Interior Branch.

"The Nephilim may have raw power, and the Corporation the supplies, but the Legion have the only true army in this region. If we are ever to defeat the Mechonids and save our people, we MUST form an alliance with them. It is a shame that Corp have almost ensured that this alliance will be one of CHITS and coin."

– Chika_004,
Palantor diplomat stationed on the warship Olympus.

"They hold onto grudges. This we can understand, for all sins have a ripple effect, and ours and our ancestors were great boulders in the lakes of life. We must make amends and repay their hostilities with kindness."

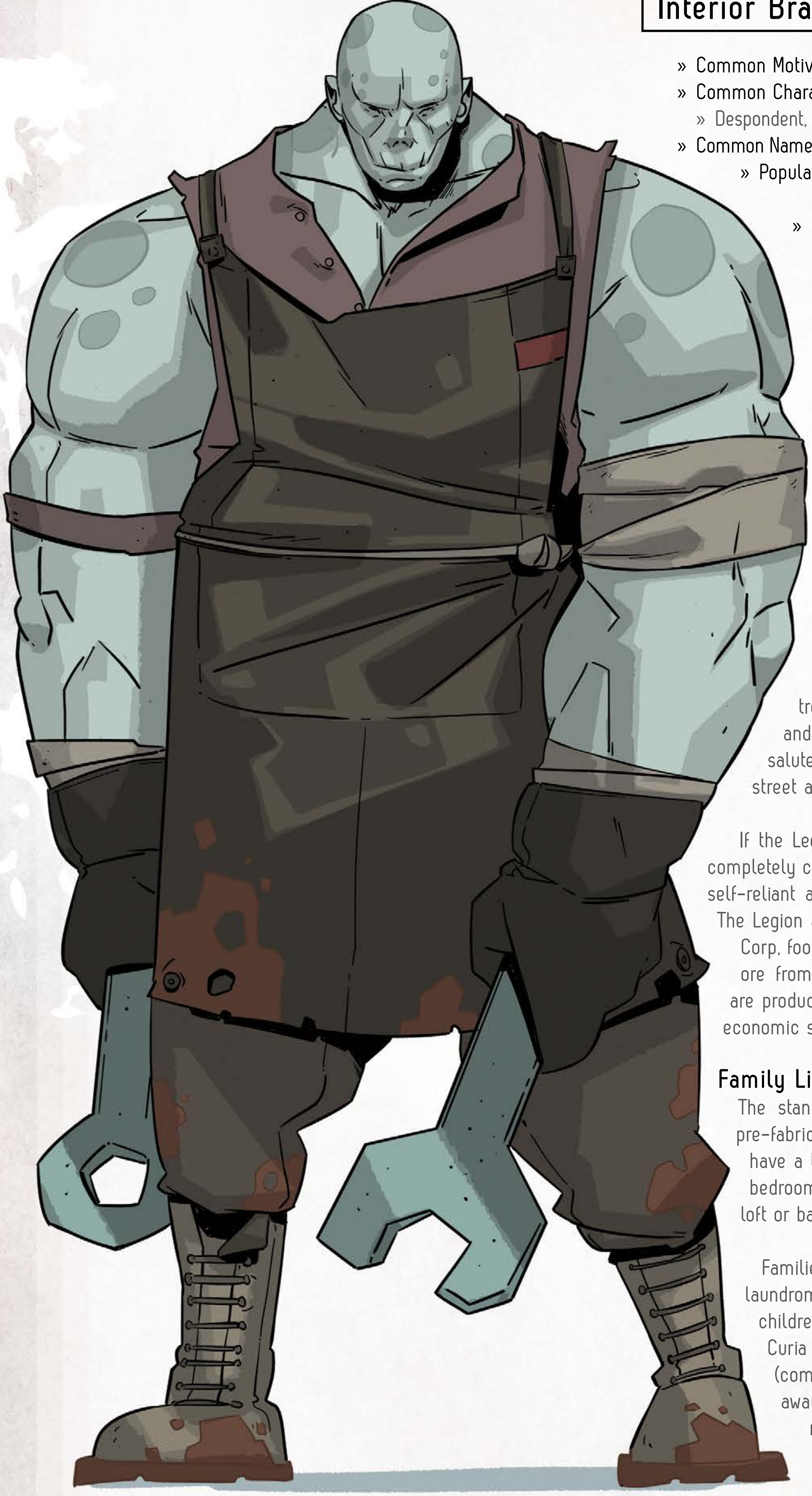
– Chigiya Jesu,
All-Monk sermon.

"They're a spiritually hollow and ugly people, but we appreciate their willingness to fight Oni and admire their martial skill."

– Rhoda Essence,
Twi-Far Dragon Symphony warrior.

"They think us Nephilim. Best not make things worse with the truth."

– Zwarlickleon,
Zhou elder.



Interior Branch

- **Common Motivations:** Social and economic security.
- **Common Characteristics:**
  - Despondent, honourable, loyal, organised, protective, stubborn.
- **Common Names & Family Names:** Same as Auxilias, see pg: 100.
  - **Population:** 51.02% of Legion.
- **Common Traits:**
  - Management / Merchant (Wealth), Streetwise (Culture), Higher Mission (Resolve), Construction (Mechanics).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - ARK Mining Laser & Kit Gun, ARK Demo Charge Shell, Functional Tactical Suit, Grav Belt, ARK Power Coil.

"It takes a REAL soldier to lay down their gun to pick up an Arc-Fire TX22 Laser drill!"
– Legion propaganda poster.

Commanded by the firm Brutus Servilla, the Interior Branch oversees all domestic Legion activities, such as farming, mining, factory work, homemaking and production-focused colonies. Those who dedicate their lives to these tasks are treated with great respect by their fellow Legion, and it is not uncommon for groups of soldiers to salute passing factory workers and farmers in the street as they head off to their shifts.

If the Legion are to be a sustainable culture that is not completely consumed into the Corporation they must become self-reliant and produce more of their own goods and food. The Legion are increasingly importing small goods from the Corp, food and spacecraft salvage from the Kaltorans, and ore from both. While they are exporting munitions that are produced in Great War-era factories, they are far from economic stability.

Family Life

The standard Legion home is small with cube-shaped pre-fabricated rooms stacked upon one another. They have a tiny communal room at the front door, a master bedroom, a single child's room with two bunk beds and a loft or basement for storage.

Families all eat at a local Mess Hall, clean in communal laundromats, exercise and play sports in large gyms, and children spend most of their time in school. The Casila Curia government is keen to have both parents work (commonly with one in a factory while the other is away fulfilling mercenary contracts) and to shape the minds of each new generation through rigorous training and a wide range of extracurricular activities. No Legion child is allowed to go hungry or fall into delinquency, but they often see their tutors more than their own parents.

Legion children physically mature quickly and their upbringings are filled with constant competition. This tough system has served Legion society well during the last century, but things are slowly starting to change as parents are experiencing the benefits of raising well-adjusted children outside of total state control.

Sports

Despite their impressive physical strength and durability, Legion are ill-suited to menial labour as they thirst for a life of action and danger. This 'inner fire' is typically managed by Legion who are not serving a combat role through hunting and intense physical sports.

The most popular sport on Cerberus Prime is **Retiarii**, which involves two teams of six moving a heavy ball through a feral Nephilim-infested maze to a hoop goal hanging on a post. Both teams are armed with shock sticks of varying styles according to their roles; two Stalkers, two Guardians, the Wall and a Striker. Every time a team scores a point their hoop goal is elevated.

Foreign sports – such as Corp **Dash Ball** and Kaltoran **Net'n'Drink** – are also starting to rise in popularity among the Legion, especially with those Auxilia who have served in Haven. The Foreign Branch is also beginning to invest in professional teams that are not exclusively Legion. All mercenary money need not come from military contracts.

Changing Economy

The old Legion economic system ran on ancient algorithms that were adapted from Archon-created logistic software, which was in turn adapted from Human-era logistic software. These systems distributed basic resources, emergency supply coupons and services to all Legion. The population would then barter amongst themselves for luxuries and extra supplies. This system was inefficient and overly prioritised governing bodies and upper management. and created civil unrest during their Years of Darkness.

In recent years, with Corporation Credits flowing into the economy from both Auxilia and Exilia mercenary work and the influx of new goods from merchant ships from Haven, the Legion are experiencing substantial economic growth. They are also increasingly adopting the Corp capitalistic system and reducing their dependence on their old systems to provide supplementary supplies for Interior Branch workers.

Bartering for goods is still common, especially among old and Nomadic Legion. Younger Legion almost exclusively use Corp Credits.

Hot Bodies & Proto-Legion

Legion have notoriously badly woven genetics due to their swift recreation into a warrior-species by the Archons during the early stages of the Great War. While their muscular bulk, tough bones, durable hides and resistance to sickness are well known, their bodies are also more susceptible to cell degradation from ageing, and run very hot due to poor homeothermy and high blood flow.

It is for this reason that Legion prefer cold environments as they can become sick when suddenly exposed to intense or prolonged heat. The iconic Legion armour is fitted with a coolant system that allows activity in most standard environments, their spacecraft systems make use of large gel-based heat-sinks, and their facilities outside of Cerberus Prime and Lilith are well-cooled.

With their expansion outside of the Cerberus system the Operations Branch has renewed their endeavours to locate data on the proto-Legion that were used to create their species. The discovery of such information may give some insight into the Archon's original intentions for the Legion before they were turned into soldiers, possibly even allowing the Operations Branch to improve the genetics of future generations.

The Legion were genetically engineered by the Triumvirate Archon faction on the Paradise Quattuoria Station. No one knows where the Paradise station resides, but it is most likely under Mechonid control. If it were to be located, both the Palantor and the Legion would be eager to secure it for themselves.

Salvaged Spacecraft

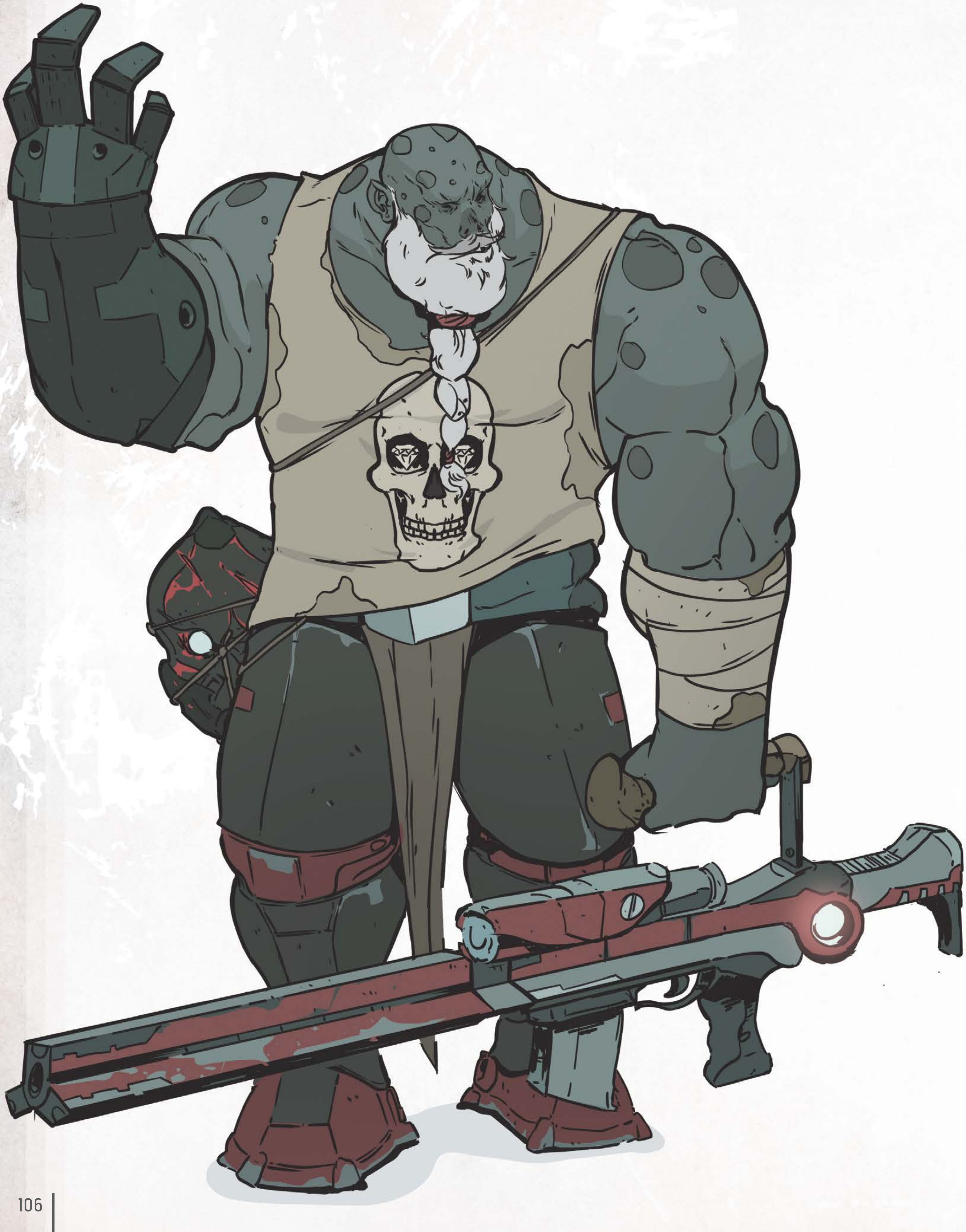
With no capacity to build new warships, the Legion are forced to salvage, repair and maintain their century-old vessels that they used during the Great War. These large and impressive warships have thick tungsten carbide hulls that wrap around their weapon systems, drop pods for swift troop deployment and strong shields that are fueled by hydrogen fusion reactors that nobody fully understands.

As both the Legion and the Kaltorans rely heavily upon salvage operations for their technological needs, they have come to an agreement to first bring each other's spacecraft wrecks to one another for barter. These exchanges will often be two or more Kaltoran wrecks for a single Legion wreck, with supplementary provisions of Legion munitions or Kaltoran food to balance out differences in quality.

The Legion have a large number of ancient disrepaired ships on the plant Charon in the Cerberus system. These vessels are being repaired by the **Shipbreaker Core**, an elite arm of the Interior Branch who are also experts in zero-gravity combat, ship infiltration and sabotage.

Technology

Interior Branch Legion make regular use of factory farms, semi-automated workshops, a wide array of imported Corp and Kaltoran tools, and many repurposed Mondian facilities. They also have access to excellent munition manufacturing facilities that were once housed inside their largest warships during the Great War. For a century they have learned to favour robust and reliable tools over the delicate and advanced.



Exilias

- **Common Motivations:** Social and economic security.
- **Common Characteristics:** Same as Auxilias, see pg: 100.
- **Common Names & Family Names:** Same as Auxilias, see pg: 100.
- **Population:** 9.91% of Legion.

- **Common Traits:**
  - Well Travelled (Influence), Tough (Strength), Solid Build (Mobility), Intimidating (Leadership), Streetwise (Culture), Treasure Hunter (Astronomy), Devastate (Heavy Arms).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Particle/Gauss/Unstable Gun, Kinetic Shell, Tungsten Carbide Assault Suit, Wpn Maintenance Kit, Burst Shield.

"Security is of no value if it only offers poverty of soul and coin. The universe is a cruel mistress, but she offers freedom and riches untold to those who have the strength to take her hand."

– Captain Ajax Storm,
Exilia pirate.

All Legion have an inner drive to be a warrior, but few are given the opportunity to do so. Those who are unable to gain employment as Auxilia mercenaries will try to satiate this Inner Fire through a wide range of physical activities, such as hunting, sport, exercise, or in darker ways such as pit fights, thuggery, piracy or non-sanctioned merc work.

Those who grate against the strict laws of the Casila Curia and see greener grass on the other side of the fence often flee Legion culture to become Exilia exiles. Legion command was slow to adapt to their encountering of the Corporation in Haven, and the Corporation were swift to see the Legion's potential as a paid fighting force. Almost two million Legion left Cerberus Prime on Corp trade vessels and stolen Legion spacecraft during those first years, and even after the creation of the sanctioned Auxilia, they still continue to bleed citizens.

More than a few Auxilia have been known to desert, especially if they are threatened with retirement due to injury or age. While some on Cerberus Prime bribe willing Corp merchants who would have returned to Haven with empty cargo hulls, while others are smuggled off-planet by dedicated Exilia smugglers wanting to 'rescue' family and friends. The Prime Branch is responsible for securing the home system and old Consul Tiberius Valeria has received much criticism for his failure to do so. Nevertheless, with each passing year the porous internal security of Cerberus Prime is improved.

Once an Exilia finds their way to the Haven, Kasuf or Var system, they are on their own. Most will sell off pieces of their prized Praetorian armour (ironically this will commonly find its way back to the Auxilia) and will be forced to take difficult and morally questionable contracts that did not pay enough to tempt the Foreign Branch. However, many Exilia prosper outside mainstream Legion culture. They may look rougher and less together than their Auxilia counterparts, but their Inner Fire is nearly always satiated and they derive great satisfaction from being masters of their own lives.

Reintegration

Forced through public pressure, the Casila Curia has shifted to taking a lighter touch with Exilia who are not Auxilia deserters or known pirates. Exilia are allowed to send funds and open mail back to their families, and may purchase expensive visitation passes that allow short stays on Cerberus Prime (these passes are refunded in full if they choose to reenlist during their stay).

Consul Selene Lulia from the Operations Branch has convinced the other Consuls that the mass exodus of their people was the blowing of a stress release valve of pent-up pressure that came about from decades of frustration, isolation and the lack of a shared vision for their people's future. Selene thinks it possible to reintegrate most Exilia back into their society, and that they should be treated with care and respect. Demanding unquestioning submission does not work on a population that has alternative options.

Consul Athena Kosta of the newly formed Foreign Branch has made her desire to see the reintegration of the Exilia very public. Her regular acceptance of Exilia into her Auxilia has caused some trouble, as many Auxilia mercenaries view all Exilia with suspicion. Despite Athena's wishes, those that rejoin the Auxilia are rarely promoted by their commanders, especially if former Exilia are too open with positive stories about their time as Exilia.

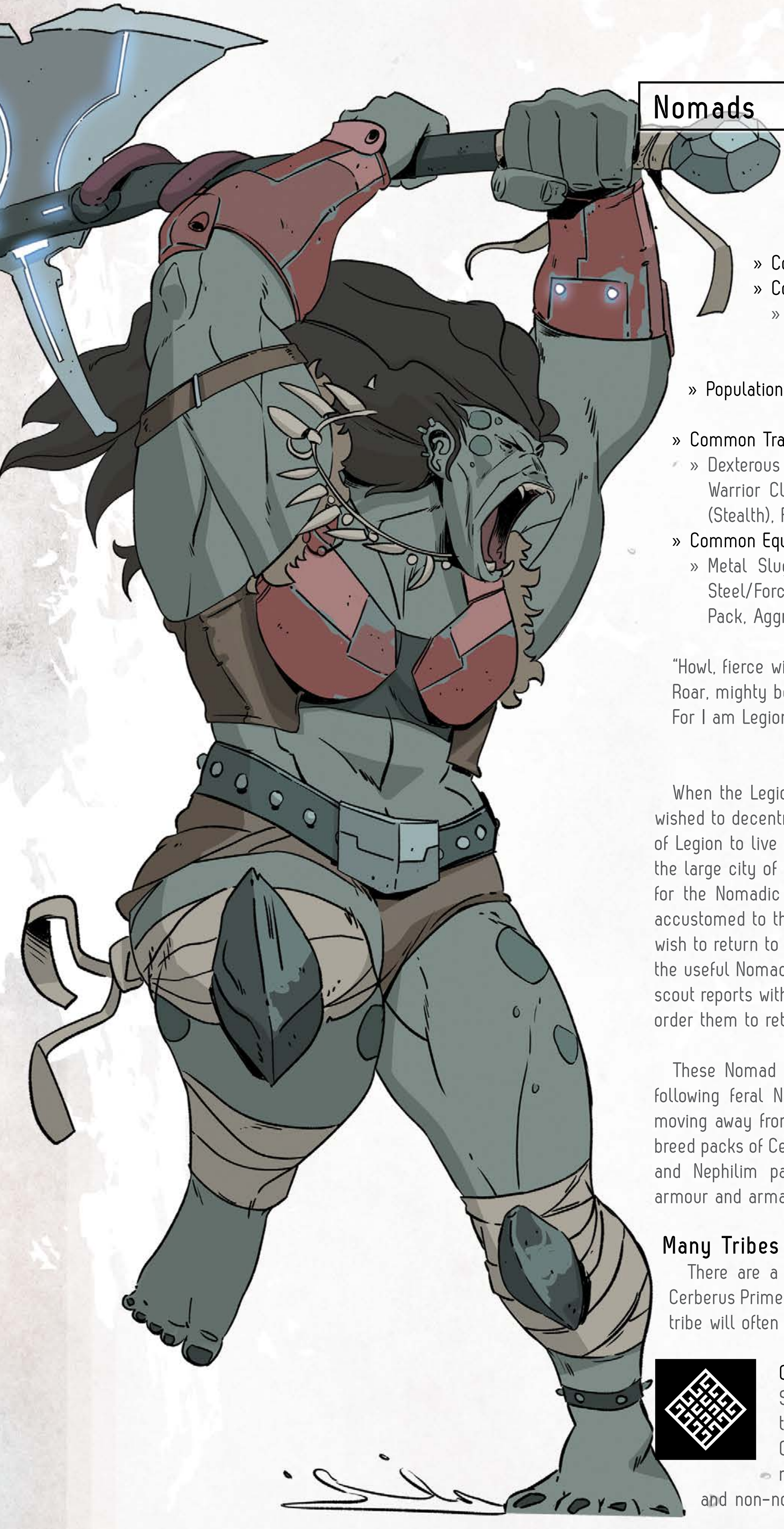
Technology

Exilia mercs are a cunning people who will make use of any technology that can give them an advantage.

Antimatter (Weapon & Fuel)
Powerful antimatter launching weapons saw some use by Archon personal Legion guards during the Great War, along with similar technologies being used in Archon reactors. Despite having access to these weapons, they have not seen widespread use by mainstream Legion forces due to the technical skills required to maintain their containment fields.

Astrogrix
Originally designed for astronomical observation, these finely made organic lenses have seen some use in the targeting systems of Exilia merc ships and ground forces. While lab-grown Astrogrix lenses do exist, they are very expensive and most Exilia prefer to harvest and cut down large lenses that are taken from the bodies of Nephilim spacecraft.

Interdiction Web
A popular pirate and police tool that can disrupt the flow of Ley Dust in a large area, pulling spacecraft out of Jump Space and making it difficult to gather the required Ley Dust to open a portal. They're simple for a competent mechanic to construct, as the most basic kinds are Jump Drives that have been re-engineered to only drain and compact nearby Dust into odd shapes, without the creation of a stable portal. Interdiction Webs are illegal to use near high-population planets.



Nomads

- **Common Motivations:** Glory and survival.
- **Common Characteristics:** Honourable, protective, proud, skilled.

- **Common Names:** Same as Auxilias, see pg: 100.
- **Common Family Names:**
  - Aetós, Alexopoulos, Bestia, Drakos, Flavian, Giorgaina, Massimo, Onasis, Thanos, Zika.

- **Population:** 6.25% of Legion.

- **Common Traits:**
  - Dexterous (Reflexes), Martial Dodge (Mobility), Fury (Grit), Warrior Class (Culture), Sleuth (Awareness), Swift Shadow (Stealth), Flora & Fauna (Planets), Pounce (Exotic).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Metal Slug Gun, Skill Master Arcane, Melee Companion, Steel/Force Shield Melee, Functional Tactical Suit, Survival Pack, Aggressive Stance, Animal Transportation.

"Howl, fierce wind!
Roar, mighty beast!
For I am Legion and I do not flinch!"
– Nemean hunter creed.

When the Legion first settled on Cerberus Prime the Casila Curia wished to decentralise some of the population and organized groups of Legion to live nomadic lives as hunters and gatherers. Over time the large city of Castra gained stability and the Casila Curia wished for the Nomadic Legion to return, but most of them had become accustomed to their liberated lives in the arctic tundras and did not wish to return to the cities, towns and outposts. Not wanting to drive the useful Nomads away – who were trading valuable resources and scout reports with the city Legion – the Casila Curia did not officially order them to return.

These Nomad Legion live in caves and tents across the planet, following feral Nephilim herds that they can hunt for food while moving away from powerful feral Nephilim that pose a threat. They breed packs of Cerbion Hounds, craft weapons and tools from salvage and Nephilim parts, and slowly spread their ancient Praetorian armour and armaments across multiple descendants.

Many Tribes

There are a half-dozen minor tribes and four great tribes on Cerberus Prime, with one large tribe in Haven. Those that leave their tribe will often choose the life of a hermit or an Exilia mercenary.

Chimera

Seen by most as just another Exilia faction, this tribe was shattered by Mechonids after they left Cerberus Prime for Mishpacha in Haven, and now consists of many Legion from other tribes and non-nomadic backgrounds. The Chimera have become particularly well known for accepting AWOL Auxilia, especially those who have become pregnant and do not wish to be forced to join the Interior Branch. The Chimera's ability to manage large Legion families (a unique trait among the Legion) has given them some protection from Legion authorities who prefer desertion to their tribe as they occasionally return.

Erymanthian (Great Tribe)

This tribe is famous for many things, but primarily their Cerbion Hound pulled sledges and trapping skills. A typical Erymanthian will have long braided hair (unlike many Legion males, nearly all Erymanthian males can grow body hair) that has many trinkets and charms weaved in. Their armour tends to be light Nephilim-hide leather and they have a preference for javelins.

Lernean (Great Tribe)

This secretive tribe is known for their cunning, distrust of outsiders and shamanistic leaders. Legends say that the Lernean tribe was founded shortly after the Legion colonized Cerberus Prime and the infamous Imperator **Domitia Lernean** resigned her command and led a force of loyal troops out into the deep arctic plains.

Nemean

This is a well-known and hospitable tribe that lives in the mountains around the great city of Castra and are comprised of many members who have abandoned urban life. The Nemeans regularly trade with the city and act as guides and guards for those that wish to travel the nearby arctic tundras. Many see the Nemeans as unofficial Auxilia, as they have even been known to work as trackers and wilderness vanguards for Auxilia forces around Haven.

Stymphalians (Great Tribe)

These gigantic Nomads are known for their physical power, bestial Nephilim pets, dangerous rights of passage for those coming of age and their pale-grey skin. Regarded by some as monsters and bandits, and others as misunderstood gentle giants. The Stymphalians are a powerful military force who make the Casila Curia nervous as they have a hatred of their authority and especially of their 'servitude' to the Corp

Styx (Lost Tribe)

The mythical lost tribe of Styx is said to be a faction that grew up alongside the Kaltorans on Kadash during the Years of Darkness. There is some weight given to the existence of this legendary tribe as Kaltoran ancestral memories do confirm that some Legion did retreat alongside them to the planet during the fall of Haven. If such a tribe did still exist they would be nothing like those Legion who settled on Cerberus Prime and would most likely live deep below the pit city of New Eden.

Inner Fire

The Legion were genetically engineered to be soldiers for the Archons. Not only were they given thick hides, large muscles and tough bones, they were also given minds that were innately disciplined, hardened against stress and predisposed towards combat. This kind of mind was incredibly effective during the Great War and the years of guerilla combat that followed, but it made settling down to create long-term colonies laborious and very difficult for the war-hungry Legion.

Legion are ill-suited to sedentary and dull lives, and need physical activity and danger. This hunger for action and conflict has been dubbed the Inner Fire, and is something that all Legion must learn to tame. This is usually done through intense physical sports, such as martial arts, hunting feral Nephilim or rough ball-based games. These occasional outputs are not enough for some city Legion who out of frustration may opt for the more physically intense and dangerous life of an Exilia merc or Nomad hunter. Nomad Legion rarely feel the pain of the Inner Fire as their lives are intensely physical and punctuated by conflicts against feral Nephilim.

Great Hunts & Great Stories

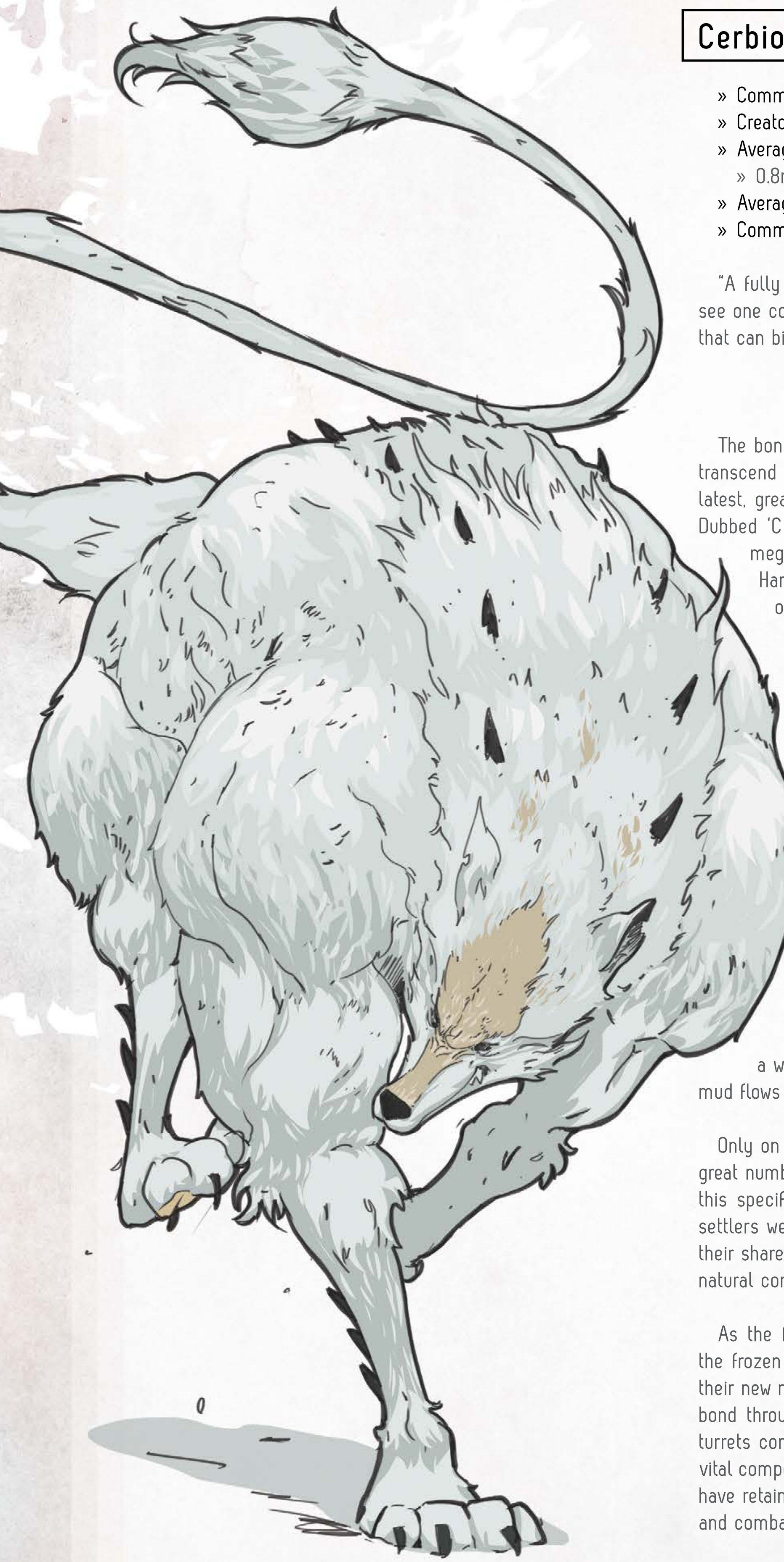
While the various Nomad tribes have their own unique cultures, they universally respect powerful hunters and warriors who have defeated a dangerous foe, especially if done in single combat or while at a disadvantage. After a noteworthy kill, a great - and often exaggerated - story will be woven about the event and a trophy made for the victorious Legion, such as a shoulder pad adorned with a skull, an ornate axe handle or a necklace.

Some violent tribes (such as the Stymphalians) will make their greatest warrior into their leader, but while all tribes give such individuals great respect and honour, they understand that leadership skills and tactical knowledge are different to individual prowess. A tribal leader is commonly an old Legion who is well-liked and respected for his or her decades of work and wisdom. Having a few stories of great hunts and victories attached to them will ensure they maintain the respect of the tribes' younger members.

Technology

The original Nomads were highly equipped soldiers with full Praetorian armour and outfitted with a wide range of weapons. Over the decades they slowly divided this gear among their growing numbers, which has now resulted in most having just one or two pieces from a full Praetorian outfit.

While Nomads have limited access to modern technologies, they are in no way ignorant of them. It is not uncommon for a few members of a tribe to have solid mechanical and electrical skills, especially in those areas related to maintaining the precious high-tech equipment that they combine with primitive armour and weapons made from feral Nephilim and beast parts. Those few Nomads that live around the Haven system tend to have more technology, some even have access to spacecraft.



Cerbion Hounds (NPC)

- **Common Motivations:** Canine animal.
- **Creator:** Humanity.
- **Average Breed Height:**
  - 0.8m (Agre), 1.2m (Ferox), 2.6m (Canache).
- **Average Life Span:** 16 years.
- **Common Names:** Bound, Chomp, Ollie, Snuggle, Vicious.

"A fully armoured Legion is already the stuff of nightmares. You see one coming at you while riding a two-metre-tall mutt with jaws that can bite through steel? That's what nightmares are afraid of."

– Ladon Stripe,
Cerbion houndmaster.

The bond between man and beast is a tradition strong enough to transcend space, time and even species. Cerbion Hounds are the latest, greatest and genetically perfected iteration of that tradition. Dubbed 'C Hounds' by their masters, these genetically engineered mega dogs are the near perfect companion for a Legion. Hardy, muscular and fully insulated against the vicious cold of Cerberus Prime, these beasts can be found across the entire span of Legion society: as beloved family pets, accompanying Nomadic hunting parties, serving in the military as mounts and trackers, and they come in many breeds of various size and temperament.

Wherever they may be found, C Hounds perfectly exemplify the hallmarks of their Legion masters: resilient as steel and loyal to the death.

Hounds, 2.0

Humans were the ones to genetically engineer the first mega hounds, although their motives for crafting beloved furry companions into killing machines has been lost to time. Iterations of the first mega hounds are now found across the galaxy in roaming packs, using their natural hardiness and genetic diversity to survive in a wide range of biomes, from the jungles of Mishpacha to the mud flows of Dashara.

Only on Cerberus Prime have these beasts been domesticated in great numbers, helped in part by genetic predispositions instilled in this specific breed by their ancient Human creators. Early Legion settlers were able to separate, train and eventually breed pups, with their shared traits of hardiness and pack loyalty making C Hounds a natural complement to the Legion way of life.

As the first factory farms and cities were established amongst the frozen tundras, tamed C Hounds hunted for food and defended their new masters from arctic feral Nephilim, forging an unbreakable bond through combat and hardship. As walls were reinforced and turrets constructed around their cities, C Hounds became less of a vital component to the Legion's everyday survival. Nevertheless, they have retained their beloved status in a different role: as family pets and combat companions to eccentric Legion.

Only Nomads eking out a harsh living in the frozen wastes still make extensive use of C Hounds for hunting, fur pelts, and for pulling their sleds through even the fiercest blizzard.

Bred for Combat

Although superficially resembling dogs of the ancient past, Mega Hounds were genetically engineered to be fighting machines. Many breeds exist, almost all sharing common physical traits: swift healing, greater intelligence than most animals, incredibly dense bones and a powerful sense of pack loyalty. Certain breeds also possess devastating jaw strength, able to easily bite through tough hides and even lightly armoured enemies.

The C Hounds of Cerberus Prime were – by necessity – forced to adapt to the arctic climate, becoming larger and more muscular than others of their kind.

The size of a C Hound greatly depends on their genus. Smaller breeds such as the hairy **Agre** stand as tall as the knee of a fully-grown Legion, and make for a perfect family pet. The **Canache** breed are by far the largest known C Hound in existence, as well as the rarest. Bred for military service, these giant beasts have been known to grow larger than a Legion and are able to serve as nigh-unstoppable steeds for Legion commanders. Their rarity also makes them prime targets for thieves and smugglers who want to sell them to dishonest Legion commanders or collectors of rare animals. The most common and iconic breed of C Hound is the **Ferox**. Known for their white fur, spiked back and deadly bite, these C Hounds can grow to be a little above a Legion's waist and are particularly intelligent and effective in combat. Ferox breeding is a common occupation for Nomadic Legion, who make their living selling pups to city-dwelling Legion trainers and other nomadic tribesmen.

Mega hounds across the galaxy have often been found with surprising genetic traits: pack communication that borderlines on language, jaws infused with acidic secretions, fur that absorbs and disperses heat, lungs that can purify toxic air, colour-shifting camouflage fur, and more. Others – such as those on Mishpacha – have also been altered by mutagenic fluid to take on even more exotic and terrifying Nephilim features in both their body and minds. Such monsters are treated as plague bearers by the Legion and are killed on sight so that they may not infect pure C Hounds packs. On Cerberus Prime, however, C Hounds are prized for their trainability, loyalty, size and durability.

> "Those big doggies are the perfect companions for you Legion. Being giant fuzz balls that are able to bite through titanium-grade Nephilim carapace is an added bonus."
> – Rachel Swagger,
> attempting to convince her Legion
> crewmate Max to buy a new pet.

Political Hounds & Eagles

The iconographic tension within Legion culture can be clearly seen by all. Their national emblem is an eagle clasping the world of Cerberus Prime, a homeworld that is named after a mythical dog, with no natural eagles and is well known for its much loved native Cerbion Hounds. The eagle in the Legion's emblem is from the largest of their Great War armadas that settled on Cerberus Prime; the **Legio XXII Kaltoran combined Defence Force**, also known as the LKDF and Legion Eagles.

The LKDF were one of many wartime Legion armadas that fought alongside Kaltoran forces and some Mondians against Ursai traitors and the Devwi-Ich's Nephilim (that would eventually settle on Eden in the Haven system). They were one of the first created Legion armies and assimilated various disparate Legion groups throughout the Great War and afterwards. Marking all new recruits' armour and ships with their iconic eagle.

The Eagle has come to represent caution, and respect for cultural traditions and hard-learned historical lessons. While the imagery of a Hound has come to represent initiative, and the Legion's need to discover their potential and forge their own future.

The Legion political system is a military dictatorship, where all laws are created and implemented by the Casila Curia, but within this system there are many competing factions. In recent years some have tried to force the Eagle and Hound philosophical groups into competing political parties, pitting them against each other so that they may achieve their desired personal goals.

Consul **Tiberius Valeria** of the Prime Branch has strong Eagle leanings, Consul **Athena "Lady Vengeance" Kosta** of the Foreign Branch is presumed to have a Hound predisposition, while Consul **Selene Lulia** and Consul **Brutus Servilla** of the Operations and Interior Branches have unknown sympathies.

Many of the Legion's greatest thinkers – and even Consul Tiberius Valeria and Consul Brutus Servilla – have given eloquent speeches about how those with leanings towards the Eagles or the Hounds should not fight, but should use their different perspectives to create viable solutions for the Legion's many problems. But try as Casila Curia may, the Legion are under immense economic and political stress. Such as the exile of the Exilia, the high death rates of Corp mercenary work, rampant smuggling and food shortages on Cerberus Prime, peace with the Eden Brood Nephilim monsters and Remnant traitors, and seeing new ways of running things thanks to the other species. Cultural change is coming for the Legion.

The Eagles say this change must be slow, so that they may preserve order and their people's identity as they apply measured wisdom to complex issues. While the Hounds promote action so that opportunities may be seized before it is too late and the Legion people are doomed to forever remain subservient to more prosperous cultures like that of the Corporation.

Nephilim (Eden Brood)

- **Creator:** The X'ion.
- **Average Life Span:** 19 (300 natural, estimated) years.
- **Population:** 1.3 billion (Eden Brood).
- **Principle Settlements:** Eden and Mishpacha (Haven).
- **Example Names:** Beytah, Fraxi, Gorgiligash, Qwar'losh.
- **Government:** Genecratic feudalism (the Devwi-Ich).
- **Primary Exports:**
  - FLESH drones (Corporation), scientific data (Corporation).
- **Primary Imports:**
  - Culture, food (Kaltoran), fuel (Corporation), scientific data.

- **Common Allies:** Corporation, Remnant.
- **Common Rivals:** Kaltorans, Legion, Zhou.

"We knowz we iz more powerful zan all ze other species. Stronger, zmarter and lezz inhibited by hollow ethics. We needz whatz only zey can give: culture. We haz no hiztory beyond war, and muz learn civil structurez and economics if we iz to survive."

– Jalziz,
civil weaver.

During the X'ion's two hundred year exile out in the dark of uncharted space beyond the Black Reach Nebula, it created a vast army. Billions of exquisitely engineered organisms that were created for the sole purpose of enacting its vengeance through the destruction of the Archons and their creations. These creatures would come to be known as the Nephilim, and were organised into massive broods that were led by an Archgenocrat general, impossibly powerful and intelligent creatures who bowed to no-one but the X'ion itself. One such Archgenocrat was the Devwi-Ich, whose brood was tasked with the destruction of the Kaltorans.

The Devwi-Ich's brood encircled the Kaltoran nation and corraled them towards their home system of Haven. The Kaltorans, along with some Archons, a large Legion force and a tiny spattering of other species fought well, but they all crumbled before the numerical and creative superiority of the Nephilim and the X'ion.

For fifteen years after the Great War and sudden departure of the X'ion, the Devwi-Ich and its brood continued to fight against Mechonids and Legion insurgents as it hunted down the last vestiges of the Kaltoran people in the region. Without direction from their X'ion creator during this long period, attrition wore away at the Nephilim – a dwindling army of monsters without purpose or resupply.

The Nephilim succeeded in killing off all of the Kaltorans except for those that hid beneath the seas of the planet Kadash, and scattered what remained of the Legion fleet across the region, but the Mechonids were a relentless and cunning foe that threatened to defeat them. With each passing year they grew in number and technological ability, while the Nephilim declined in both.

The Devwi-Ich saw a thin path forward that could possibly result in its survival. Nephilim that were cut off from their command structure would devolve into a feral state, becoming little more than animalistic beasts or primitive tribes, but were also ignored by the Mechonids. The Devwi-Ich also noticed that Mechonids without prey would hibernate.

Against the desires of many of its subordinate Genocrats, the Devwi-Ich gathered together its remaining spacecraft and forces and landed (or crashed if ill-suited for atmospheric entry) onto the toxic world of Eden, the former capital planet of the Kaltorans. There the Devwi-Ich slumbered for almost fifty years beneath a mountain of Nephilim spacecraft corpses, along with its remaining supplies and finest troops.

The reasons why the Devwi-Ich chose that inhospitable world are not fully known. Two of its greatest Genocrats – the mighty Meggido and the cunning Trojdaz – remained to fight against each other on the nearby jungle world of Mishpacha, while the insightful Frig'lidos took a large force into the Halo Nebula, and the mysterious Kil-drock travelled into Mondian space.

While the Devwi-Ich slumbered its Nephilim brood was without purpose and order, and they devolved into various feral Nephilim forms. With the eventual arrival of the Corporation in the Haven system the Devwi-Ich awoke. It forcefully took control of many of the greatest tribes and packs of feral Nephilim on Eden, and with renewed purpose and the formation of the city of Necronus the brood was reborn. The Devwi-Ich publicly (though possibly inauthentically) cast off all ties to the X'ion who had abandoned them and vowed for its Eden Brood to make their own way and to set their purpose.

In the Corporation the Devwi-Ich saw an opportunity for building a new society for its brood. It forged an alliance with these newcomers, knowing that the only way for its brood to survive the ages was to create a new culture for themselves that would take them beyond the purpose of their creation. To cement this alliance the Devwi-Ich assisted the Corporation in their resettlement into Haven with the construction of a space station around the gas giant Alabaster.

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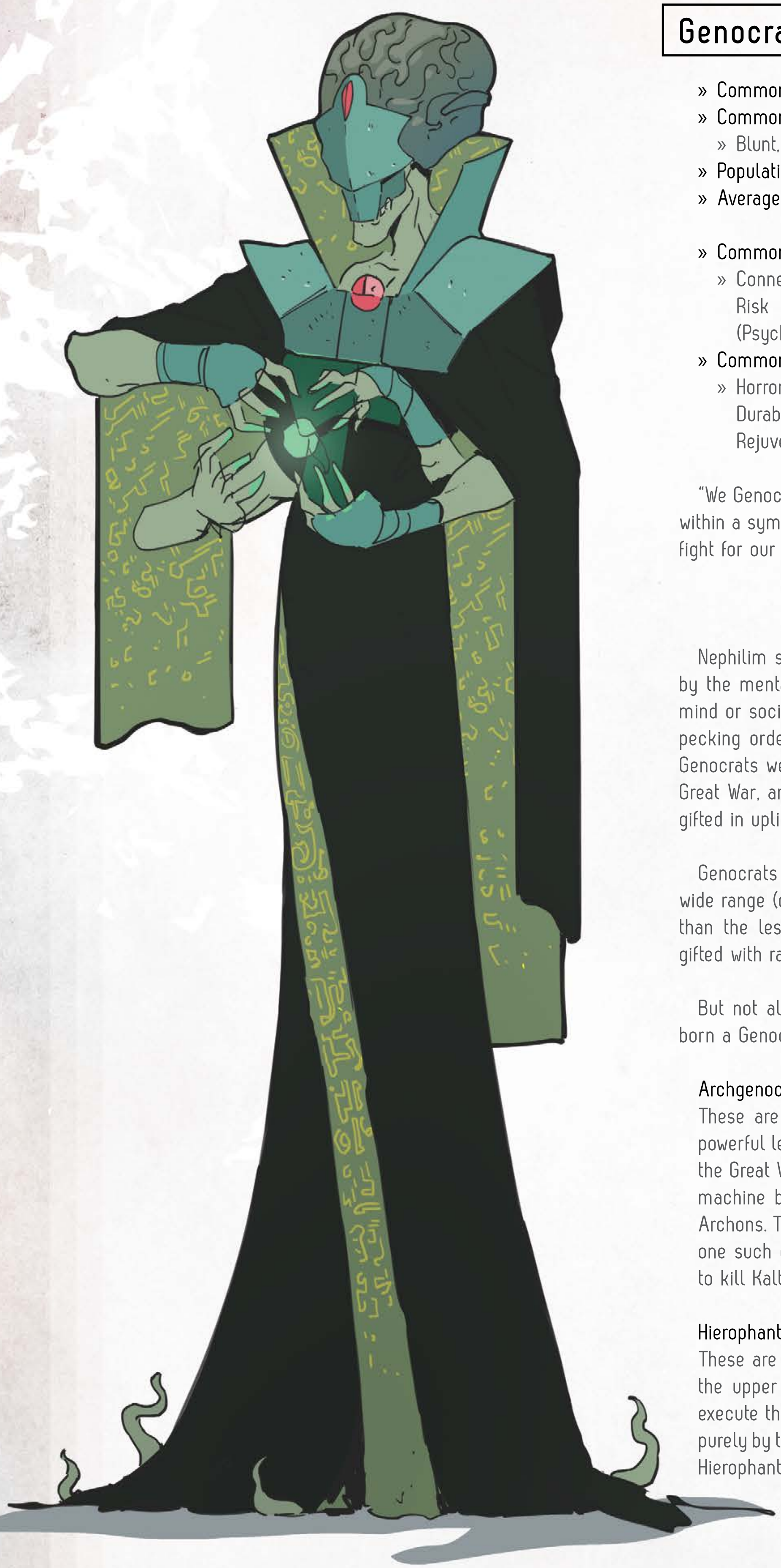
Over the coming years the dedication of the Eden Brood to this new path was intensely tested as new species – many hostile to all Nephilim, such as the Kaltorans and Legion – emerged back into space, or settled in Haven. While the Eden Brood holds the power to once again destroy all of the other species, they know that they must be more than the monsters that they were created to be.

The Eden Brood's alliance with the Corporation has proven to be incredibly fruitful, as the Corp are dedicated to inter-species networking and spreading their cultural and economic influence. The Nephilim have also genetically engineered a new Emissary strain to acclimatize the other species to their presence, a less monstrous-looking Nephilim with a more Corp or Kaltoran-like appearance. The brood still seeks to grow in power in all ways that it can, namely through scientific advancement and the reclamation of powerful feral Nephilim back into their brood.



Genocrats

- **Common Motivation:** Power.
- **Common Characteristics:**
  - Blunt, dismissive, focused, intelligent, logical, proud, ruthless.
- **Population:** 0.000001% of Eden Brood Nephilim.
- **Average Height:** 2m.

- **Common Traits:**
  - Connected (Influence), Educated/Foresight (Intelligence), Risk Assessment (Grit), Management (Wealth), Politician (Psychology), Swarm (Tactical), Ultimate Plan (Tactical).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Horror Swarm Shell, Arcane, Companion, Refractor Shroud Durable Clothing, Carapace Tactical/Assault Suit, Flesh Rejuvenator, Bio-Tech/Leadership Toolbox.

"We Genocrats and the other Nephilim strains were created to exist within a symbiotic framework. We require them to produce, build and fight for our society, and they require us to to rule it."

– Varshreeck,
Genocrat Hierophant of Necronus spire Ayilck.

Nephilim society can be harsh and unforgiving, and is dominated by the mentality that might makes right. Be that might of muscle, mind or social status. This has given rise to a generally recognised pecking order that is based on genetics and individual power. The Genocrats were created by the X'ion to rule the Nephilim during the Great War, and are exceptional genetic specimens who are uniquely gifted in uplifting Nephilim out of a feral state.

Genocrats are not a particular genetic strain of Nephilim, but are a wide range (often one of a kind) of genera. They are always smarter than the lesser Nephilim, and are often also stronger, faster and gifted with rare powers. They are the 'aristocracy' of the Nephilim.

But not all Nephilim rulers are Genocrats, and not all who were born a Genocrat are able to hold onto power.

Archgenocrats

These are the greatest of the X'ion's creations, the incredibly powerful leaders that commanded each of its massive broods in the Great War. Each one was built piece by piece like an organic machine by the X'ion itself to fight a specific creation of the Archons. The **Devwi-Ich** – leader of the Eden Brood Nephilim – is one such creation, every part of its body and mind engineered to kill Kaltorans.

Hierophants

These are the most capable of the Genocrats, and they occupy the upper echelons of Eden Brood society. It is their task to execute the will of the Devwi-Ich, and their status is maintained purely by the success of their governance over their subordinates. Hierophants are limited by almost no laws or moral structures, those who fail to create prosperity for the Nephilim are quickly replaced and often killed.

Deacons

These are the common Genocrats. High-ranking governing bureaucrats, scientific leaders, colony overseers, administrators of major infrastructure projects and advisors to the Hierophants. They are the day-to-day commanders of the Eden Brood, and they rule through force and cunning.

Lessercrats

These Genocrats have failed to live up to the expectations of their genes, and are commonly found as spacecraft captains, aids to lesser Nephilim rulers or working with hunting teams to uplift the minds of minor feral Nephilim in remote regions of space. Many Lessercrats were born feral or have mixed non-Genocrat genes, but most simply lack the brutal qualities of character and ruthless ambition required for higher public office in the Eden Brood.

Risencrat

This is a special designation given to non-Genocrats who have gained authority through personal exceptionalism. Risencrats are widely respected and envied by lesser Nephilim, but viewed with suspicion by Genocrats. More than a few Risencrats have been elevated to the office of Hierophant, but they are always accompanied by a true Genocrat subordinate (often a Lessercrat) who has the power to elevate a Nephilim out of a feral state.

While genetics dictate almost the entire life of a Nephilim, they still value results above all else.

Nephilim under a Genocrat's command are considered their subjects, and property and are under their protection but must obey their every demand – even to the point of death. Each Genocrat has their own laws and is responsible for enforcing them. It's a feudal-styled society, with subjects binding themselves to the ruler of land, spacecraft, or a city spire for protection and provision. It all leads to a pyramid of power, capped by the Archgenocrat.

Devwi-Ich

The unchallenged ruler of the Eden Brood Nephilim is the enigmatic Devwi-Ich, who lives beneath the corpse city of Necronus in a maze of caverns that were once the cargo bays and workshops of great organic warships. The Devwi-Ich is the Archgenocrat who was created to lead the massive Nephilim brood that was set against the entire Kaltoran nation during the Great War.

The Devwi-Ich is a uniquely designed creature that could integrate itself into the nervous system of the Nephilim's gigantic warships. With huge spider-like appendages it would assume control over the living vessels so as to directly command its forces with labyrinthine intellect and cunning. This ability to puppet other Nephilim (and possibly other species) is a power that it does not shy away from, as it will regularly call subordinate Genocrats into its presence to have their minds read and altered.

> "But for the grace of the Devwi-Ich there go I."
> – Nephilim saying in regards to feral Nephilim.

The Devwi-Ich stands at an impressive height of just under 30 metres, has a body coated in near-impenetrable self-replicating graphene carapace, and has a sea of tentacles and limbs, each with a specialized function (many of which are for attacking and exploiting Archons and Kaltorans). Its multiple brains (which lead some to justifiably see it as multiple entities within a single body) are spread throughout its central torso, with supporting organs within its legs. Despite its depiction in Corp pop-culture movies, the Devwi-Ich is not a giant Nephilim-queen that spends all of its time laying eggs, it cannot in fact reproduce at all as it is a uniquely constructed creature that was built and not born.

During the Great War the Devwi-Ich would regularly switch its host spacecraft so that it could not be targeted for assassination. Some suspect that it may have secretly left Eden some time ago, but this is unlikely. The most notable non-Nephilim to see the Devwi-Ich in person and survive are; **Keaton Ark**, the late **Jane Pinnacle**, **Jonas Sol** and the Palantor blue spark **Omo Vaachasya_080** of House Toad. While **Vix the 'Smiling Slayer'** (founder of the Corporation) famously refused to visit the Devwi-Ich when he brought the Corporation to Haven, as many assume he knew of its mind-controlling abilities. The Devwi-Ich prefers to work through a complex network of proxies and spies, as its direct involvement has a record of making other species cagey and defensive.

The Kaltorans have a deep and well-justified hatred of the Devwi-Ich, an opinion that is also shared in part by the Legion, while the Devwi-Ich is particularly cautious of the Zhou. It is with some irony that the Devwi-Ich and its gene weavers are uniquely positioned to assist all three of these species with their genetic ailments. Especially the Kaltorans, as the Devwi-Ich understands them in ways that even their Archon creators did not. Only time will reveal if the Devwi-Ich is waiting for an opportunity to aid them and forge an unlikely alliance between ancient enemies, or to hold its cards close so that it may exploit their weaknesses for the benefit of the Eden Brood.

Despite being one of the few living creatures in the galaxy to have had a personal relationship with the X'ion, the Devwi-Ich has publicly denounced its creator as a failure and advocated for peace between the species of Haven. But many are understandably cautious of the Devwi-Ich and its Nephilim brood, not only because of their monstrous past and nature, but also because of their great power. All know that the Eden Brood Nephilim have the means to destroy all of the other species if they were to have another war, and all know that the Devwi-Ich is most likely the most powerful entity within the Haven system. There is peace between the species primarily because the Devwi-Ich wills it… which means that all is most likely going according to its secret plans.

Culture Weavers

Most of the Genocrats understand that the Eden Brood needs to create a stable and effective culture for itself to survive. They believe they have a firm grasp on the nature side of the 'Nature vs Nurture' equation but are lacking in the latter. While they and the Legion were both created solely for the Great War, the Legion had Archon-sub-cultures and ancient Human history to draw upon, while the Nephilim were only given brutality and submission by their X'ion creator.

Eden Brood culture is firmly authoritarian, lacks value for life and is driven by brutal logic, but it is changing. Acknowledging the value of quality civil institutions and commerce systems has been easy for them to grasp, but appreciating the worth of ethics, art, individual liberty and the bonds created by shared cultural traditions have been far more difficult. Although bit by bit, some of the greatest Genocrat thinkers are starting to understand the scientifically provable value of some of the ethical structures that the other species are continuously attempting to create and uphold.

While organic adoption of cultural elements from the other species is unavoidable (particularly from the Corporation), the Genocrat culture weavers do not wish to have their civilization completely formed by trial and error, or to shortcut their development by the total assimilation into another species' culture. The Nephilim culture weavers understand that they are a unique people, with unique challenges, chief being their natural lack of empathy, limited emotional range and inclinations toward force. This biological empathic impairment makes cultural development for the Nephilim difficult, as they will very rarely naturally fall towards a path of mutual support that the other species tend to take... a phenomenon that is even seen within the Corporation who claim to be all about individualism.

Hierophant rulers are starting to experiment with judicial systems that do not always result in death. Deacons have facilitated some truly unusual art exhibitions on Corp space stations around Alabaster (which have been met with a mixture of delight and disgust) and the Devwi-Ich itself has decreed two days of brood-wide festivities.

Bond Day

A day that marks the Nephilim and Corporation's completion of the Alabaster One space station, and the solidification of the alliance between the two. Traditionally celebrated with green and yellow fireworks in space, fine wine and meaty Nephilim foods. This is a popular event on the Alabaster space stations.

Unity Festival

A three-day festival to encourage peace between the species that is noted for its large Corp sports events and outdoor Remnant sermons (two species that are keen on the festival, but not so keen on each other). Also controversially, the Devwi-Ich has ordered that all of its Hierophants give a public in-person gift to a person from another species on the final day of the festival. This has often gone poorly when a Hierophant has attempted to give a gift to a Kaltoran or Legion.

Language: Nephilim

Of all the languages in the Haven system the language of the Nephilim is by far the most alien and physiologically dependent. This extremely complex language makes use of a speaker's full range of available senses and their entire body. Its meanings often obscured or revealed by the speaker's physical attributes, including pheromones, multiple - or exotic - vocal cords, posture and positioning, and many other means that are often specific to each genus. Designed by the X'ion for its Nephilim army, this language was most likely made to be nearly incomprehensible to the Archons and their creations.

Gargantuan

These large Nephilim have huge lungs and were designed to be able to bellow warcries across a battlefield, spreading fear and confusion. So loud can these battle cries be, that they can cause damage to nearby eardrums of smaller creatures. Gargantuans have also been known to communicate with each other with simple low-pitch grunts and hums.

Junk (Common Neph)

Always crude and sharp, Junk Neph is a term used for the large array of simplistic dialects that the common Nephilim population use to communicate with each and other species. It has a guttural edge to it, with elements of the Corp language woven into its limited vocabulary.

Oni Brood

The deep-throated language of the hulking Oni Brood can sound deceptively brutish and simple, but this could not be further from the truth. As the Oni Brood's interactions with the other species are almost exclusively in the form of warfare and torture, full conversations and written examples of the Oni language are rarely witnessed.

The Oni language is an evolved branch of Nephilim. Over the past century since the Great War the Oni Brood have discarded the parts of their root language ill-suited to their physiology, and have expanded the parts that suited them, namely their ability to use and perceive a wide spectrum of low pitches. Some academics have speculated that the Oni's hearing is so well adjusted to low pitches that they cannot distinguish between many high-pitch sounds. We may never know, as the Oni adamantly refuse to converse with those they consider "cattle" - which is everyone who is not an Oni.

Spacecraft (Neph Code (NC))

Nephilim spacecraft largely make use of bio-electrical conduits to communicate with their crew through holographic displays and to other spacecraft through bio-digital transmissions. While their underlying data structures are complicated and uncluttered, they are in fact sentient creatures with a brain and organic subsystems that work very much like traditional computers. While they understand and use the mainstream Nephilim language, they also make use of a far more functional chemically-based system to gather, compute and distribute the complex data that is needed for space travel.

Tenebrous

These complex Nephilim have equally complicated vocal cords and tentacle-related vocabularies that allow them to communicate a staggering amount of precise information to one another. Though Tenebrous have been known to struggle with simplistic communication with the Nephilim language, and often prefer to use Corp for its ability to communicate uncluttered ideas in a timely manner.

Technology

The Eden Brood Nephilim are incredibly keen on almost all forms of scientific advancement and have multiple large spires in the city of Necronus, remote research stations and exploration vessels dedicated to the task. It is also of little surprise that they are particularly fixated on biological advancement and have a "the ends justify the means" approach to research that often lands them in diplomatic issues with the other species. Skilled Nephilim scientists are in high demand across the region, particularly with the Corp, but have also been known to be hired by Palantor anti-Mechonid outfits, Remnant planetary survey teams and spacecraft captains in need of a medical officer.

Bone & Carapace

Despite their organic nature, Nephilim carapace and bones are as strong as metal, come in many forms, and are often self-maintaining. The downside of these materials is that they tend to go brittle if they're not fed a range of simple nutrients for a prolonged period of time. They can also be a little bulkier than their metal counterparts.

Blended Technology & Neph Equipment

During the Great War all Nephilim technology and equipment was organic, many of which were creatures with their own minds and an array of intricate internal organs. These 'equipment' Nephilim were known as Bitsa (Bitsix if capable of sentience) or Tech Nephs.

Unfortunately, most of these smaller Nephilim died during the Age of Darkness as they were completely dependent on other Nephilim to provide for them. They often starved, wasted away or were eaten by feral Nephilim. This is why modern Eden Brood Nephilim make extensive use of non-organic technologies (that are often supplied by the Corporation) to supplement their array of organic equipment.

Monomolecular (Weapon)

True monomolecular technologies are incredibly uncommon as they require rare minerals, expensive maintenance and construction technologies that are only held by the Palantor and Nephilim. Monomolecular blades, whips, bullets, and invisible wire traps used by Humanity in their conflicts during the Age of Gnawing, and lesser quality variants and tools saw limited use throughout the Archon empire. Kaltorans were particularly well-known for their monomolecular coil guns, and Nephilim for their monomolecular bone blades and barbs during the Great War.

"They are valuable customers who are misjudged for their fearsome appearance… but off the record, I can't help but feel that their Devwi-Ich is far more aware and in control than the BoM would like to think."

– Victor Pinnacle,
Corporate technical PR director, Pinnacle Fuel.

"They have not wronged us since our return to space. But our dreams are filled with nightmares that wear their faces, and this taints all of our interactions."

– Yasmina Filch,
Kaltoran captain of the Crosshair.

"Hardship is our air, food, clothes, shelter, mentor, friend and family. It is forever with us, refining and lifting us up to be the best we can be, and ridding us of those who would make us weak."

– Bilidricks,
Nephilim culture weaver Deacon.

"We don't plan on starting anything… but when they finally make their move, this time we will be ready for them."

– Brisa Casca
Legion exilia.

"Of all the things to wake up to with our return to the physical universe, these Nephilim were the most unexpected. They look like the cheesy monsters from a video game, the kind that are 'super-duper-evil' and that you get points for gunning down en masse. But not only do we share a common enemy in the Mechonids, they're also far more complicated and layered than expected."

– Yuuto_0029,
Palantor merc.

"For the time being we should keep our distance from the Nephilim, for we do not want those within our species who are secretly loyal to the X'ion to find each other."

– Haatsari Jesu,
Remnant All-Monk.

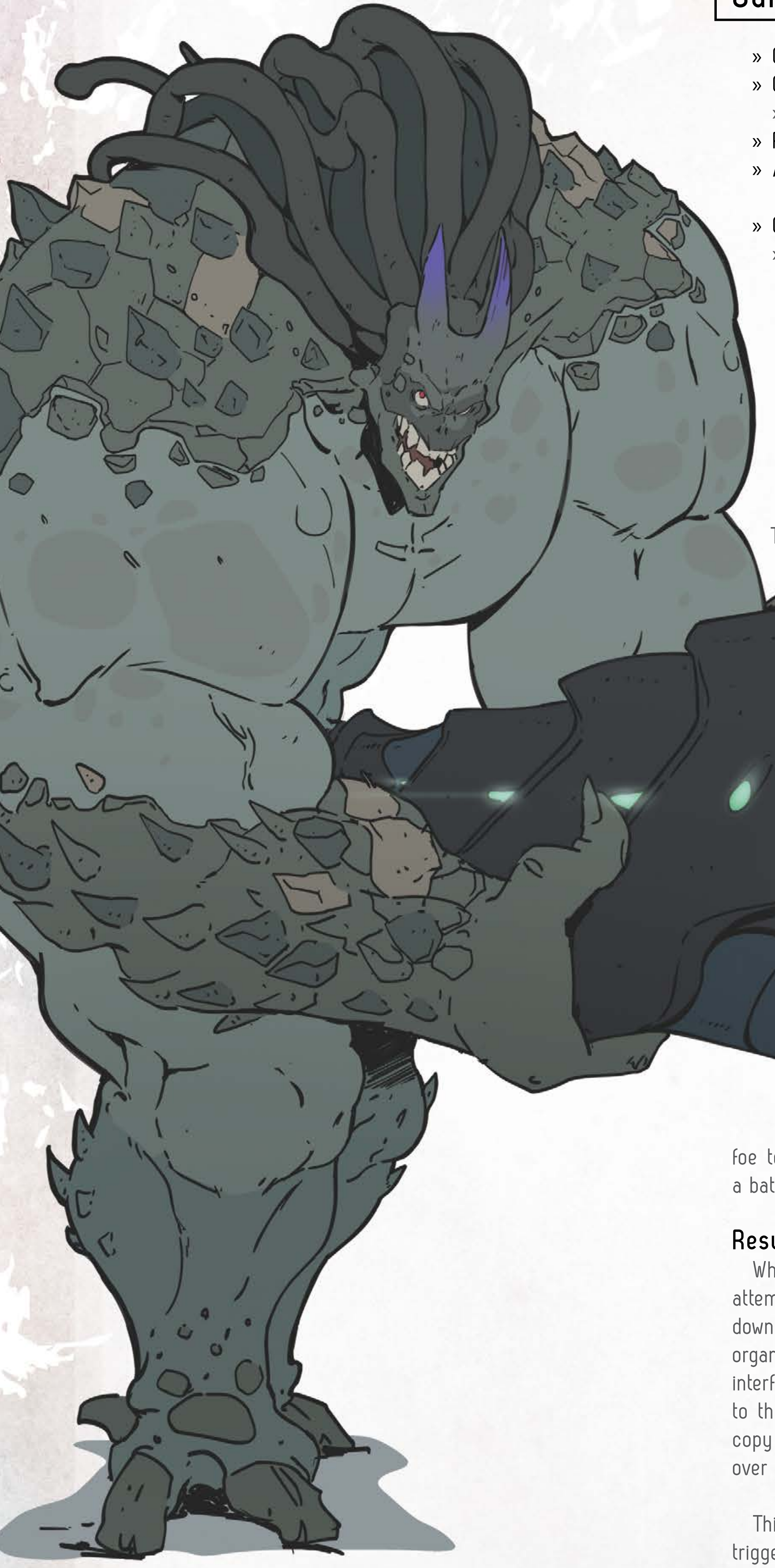
"It is rather odd being chased for years through the stars by a most monstrous Nephilim Brood only to run into the protective arms of a different one… but we are thankful for the Eden Broods aid against the Oni Brood.

These Nephilim can be a brutish and uncultured people, but we respect their desire to be more than they are, and they have more than earned goodwill."

– Hanzi Forevertrail,
Twi-Far Dragon Symphony warrior.

"They taste so good! It is very hard to not snack on them when I grew up eating them back on Praid."

– Zopo,
Zhou Amber Bark Pathfinder hunter.



Gargantuans

- **Common Motivations:** Power, survival.
- **Common Characteristics:**
  - Blunt, focused, instinctual, ruthless, fierce.
- **Population:** 8.12% of Eden Brood Nephilim.
- **Average Height:** 3.1m

- **Common Traits:**
  - Massive (Strength), Portly (Reflexes), Solid Build (Mobility), Presence (Leadership), Regeneration (Physical), Pulverise (Heavy Arms), Take Point (Tactical).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Barb/Poison Thrower Gun, Shrapnel Shell, Bone Melee, Regen Assault Suit, Blast Nodes Shield, Serious Face Stance, Physical/Resolve Toolbox.

"My nightmares are of great big walls of flesh and fire. Grey silhouettes punctuated in the night by green flashes of energy. The low toned grunts of Nephilim orders, the whirring sound of poison barbs flying through the air and the screams of death.

How am I to look these mountains of suffering in the eye, knowing that those I dream of still live and may be standing before me?"

– Jacob Fistfire,
Kaltoran merchant on Eden.

The Gargantuan strain was a primary Nephilim soldier that was used against the Kaltoran nation during the Great War. They were massive mountains of muscle that wielded giant weapons and had regenerative flesh that made them incredibly resistant to light weapon fire. But what truly set them apart and made them a particularly difficult foe to contend with was their ability to resurrect each other after a battle.

Resurrection

When a Gargantuan receives critical damage their body will attempt to flood their system with crude mutagenic fluid that will shut down their minds and attempt to prevent further harm to their vital organs. This locks them into a stasis mode until another Gargantuan interfaces with them via their head tentacles to pass vital nutrients to the downed individual. This process is very slow and may also copy portions of the healthy Gargantuan's thoughts and memories over to the recipient to repair damaged holes in their personality.

This failsafe system does have the downside of occasionally triggering prematurely and shutting down a soldier that could have kept fighting. While this does curb the power of a Gargantuan in an individual battle, its ability to preserve their numbers over the duration of a prolonged war makes it incredibly valuable. It was not uncommon for a single Gargantuan to have died multiple times throughout their life, though their personality would have changed if they suffered head damage. After resurrecting, or being resurrected, a Gargantuan must resupply their bodies with nutrients through the consumption of a large amount of food. Depriving a Gargantuan of food during this time will result in their permanent death.

Head Tentacles & Procreation

The iconic head tentacles that so many Nephilim have are multipurpose organic data-transfer organs. Their primary function is to act as a set of umbilical cords during gestation to allow swift and precise growth. They can also be used to connect a Nephilim up to an organic computer to allow information transfer or the control of a system, or for procreation to allow two Nephilim from different strains to unconsciously compute a biologically sustainable offspring.

Most Nephilim during the Great War were spawned from egg-laying facilities or specialized Nephilim 'Mothers' who were designed to hatch what the brood was in need of. But nearly all Nephilim have the ability to reproduce, those that do not may only do so in limited numbers through Mothers or in labs.

The term Pure Blood is used to describe those Nephilim who are of a strain that was designed before or during the Great War, Hybrids are those with a linage of two or more different Pure Bloods.

Long Lifespan

Most sentient Nephilim are thought to have a natural lifespan of two hundred years, but due to their violent nature and a culture of not valuing life, few will reach this venerable age. Older Nephilim are also increasingly prone to going feral, requiring them to stay closer to their commander. Powerful Nephilim (and especially Genocrats) have access to secret restorative technologies that can reverse the damage of ageing through cell regeneration or cloning. Cloning was sparingly used during the Great War by the Nephilim, as reproducing full-grown complex organism with their minds intact is incredibly costly.

Due to their regenerative abilities, many Gargantuans are still alive that fought in the Great War. This has caused some trouble with the Legion and Kaltorans, but Gargantuans look on their history with cold unsympathetic thoughts. Given the nature of their creation and the impossibility of them knowing any differently from what they knew, the war and its outcomes were inevitable and there is nothing to be gained from sorrow or regret.

Constrained Might & PR

The Eden Brood Nephilim have access to a huge fighting force, but they do not wish to use them as mercenaries like the Legion or as a military to bully other species away from prime resources like the Corp. They wish to maintain peace so that they may grow and flourish, and having the other species see them as a military threat could trigger an arms race that could lead to war. They are by far the most powerful faction in the region, but their regular self-imposed constraint has prompted some to speculate that they are doing so because they have a greater secret plan, or that they are just incredibly confident in their position.

With the bulk of the Legion firmly locked into employment with the Corporation, many other species in want of a fighting force have reached out to the Eden Brood for help. Combats against the Mechonids are appreciated by the Palantor, but as the Palantor are a minor faction within the region the Eden Nephilim are not particularly worried about being in their good graces. Mechonids are a particularly dangerous threat, so the Eden Brood will only engage them when they have a strong incentive to do so.

Combats against the Oni are particularly good for their public image as they help to set the Eden Brood apart from other Nephilim. They also don't fear the Oni's proclivities for taking slaves like the other species and are resistant to their energy-draining gas clouds. Though they have mixed feelings about the arrival of a fleet of Oni World Ships in the Haven system. Such a powerful threat could cause huge amounts of lasting damage, but could also unite all of the species together to battle a great shared enemy.

The Eden Nephilim are cautious of helping Remnant refugees to fight Echoes. While the Remnant are a small faction within Haven, they are growing in power and offer an alternative sustainable culture to the Corp. But the Remnant were once the Ursai, traitors who aided the Nephilim and still have many people who are loyal to the X'ion.

Technology

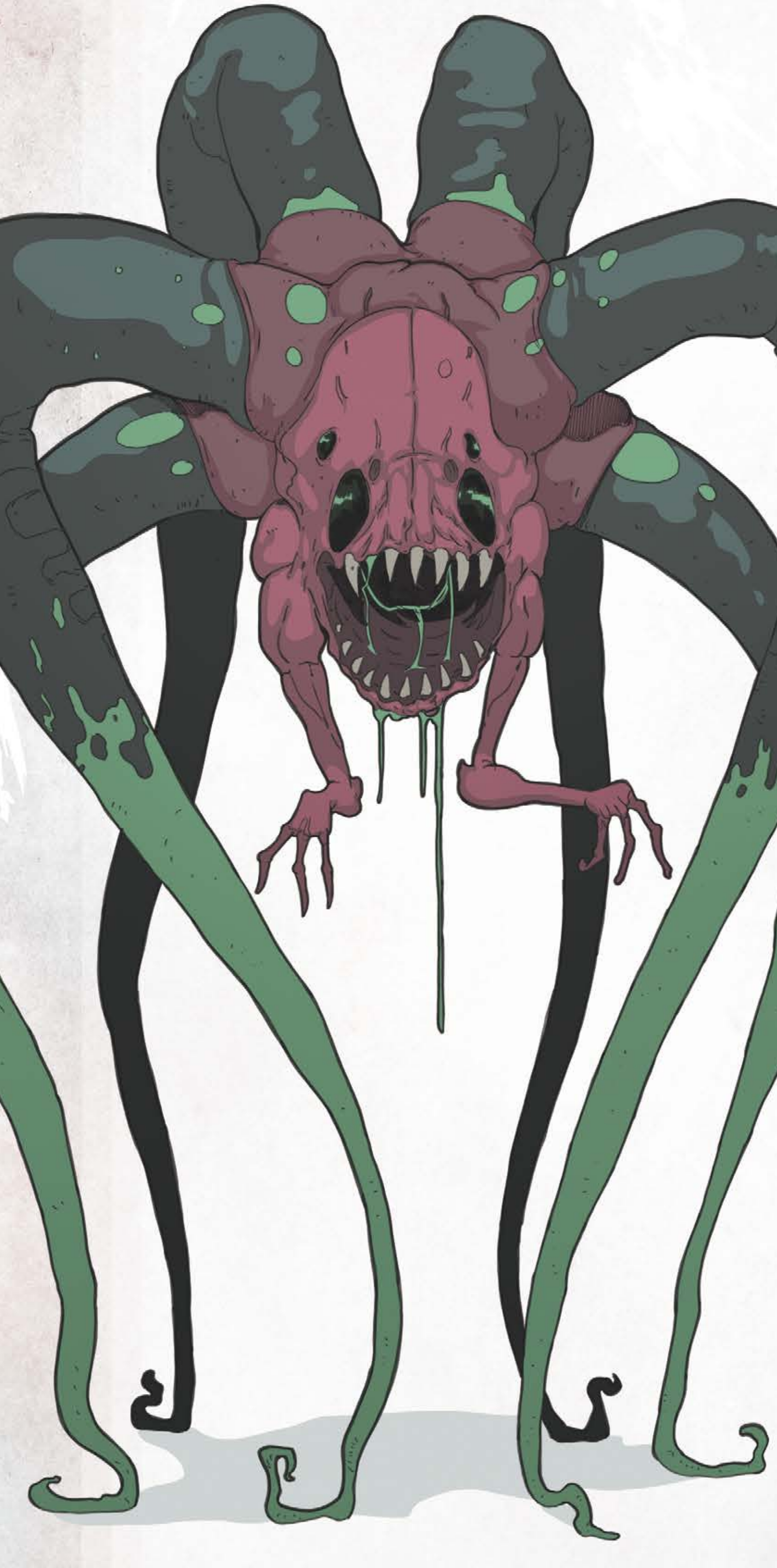
Gargantuans made use of straightforward and reliable weapons during the Great War, with many being oversized and lacking in weight optimisation.

Acid, Poison & Barb Spitters (Weapon)

Nephilim make use of a wide range of organic physical projectile weapons. Some of these are propelled by rows of muscles that can store large amounts of potential energy like a spring, but most make use of magnetic fields or swift-expanding liquid propellant systems. These can be used to fire chitin barbs laced with neurotoxins, molecular acid or incendiaries. Unloaded barbs can be fired at a much higher rate.

Regen Seeds

This symbiotic organism was widely used during the Great War and especially by the Gargantuans. It is a collection of worm-like creatures that feed on the host's body and builds up tiny amounts of unprogrammed Flesh Rejuvenation fluid in cysts (called Seeds) just beneath the skin. The organism will feed these cysts and quickly activate them to protect its host when threatened. The host must eat a wide range of gross-looking Nephilim foods to keep these Seeds full.



Tenebrous

- **Common Motivations:** Power, scientific advancement.
- **Common Characteristics:**
  - Blunt, focused, intelligent, logical, proud, ruthless.
- **Population:** 5.03% of Eden Brood Nephilim.
- **Average Height:** 1.75m

- **Common Traits:**
  - Extra Limbs (Reflexes), Flight (Mobility), Driven (Focus), Studious (Intelligence), Pragmatic (Psychology), Unethical (Resolve), Gene Weaver (Bio-Tech), Surgeon (Medicine), Support Fire (Tactical).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Poison Gun, Arcane, Companion, Skill Carapace Outfit, Flesh Rejuvenator, Bio-Tech/Medicine Toolbox.

> "Galactic society is forever changing: new species, never-seen-before technologies and freshly terraformed worlds. But judging by appearances it is steadily becoming the domain of fools – and the Tenebrous are perhaps the prime example."
>
> – Elisavet Forcion,
> Legion Exilia merc.

At first glance, they appear to be an uglier-than-usual Nephilim creation: bulbous, gas-inflated bodies, surrounded by thick tentacles and equipped with two awkward looking arms. However, hidden behind the oversized-jaws and obsidian eyes are the keenest scientific minds, bred for innovation and progress. The Tenebrous can now be found moving among the highest echelons of Corp, Twi-Far and Palantor scientific societies, proving to sceptical peers that a grotesque outer shell is no hindrance to the pursuit of knowledge.

Varied Abilities

While all Tenebrous were engineered for cunning and insight, there is a wide variety of abilities spread across their strain. Their body contains gases that suspend their central mass, allowing some to levitate or even fly, while a rare few with low buoyancy must scurry along the ground. Their gullets are complex chemical plants that can allow for the mixing of ingredients or the spitting of acid. Some are able to alter their skin colours, even going so far as to allow near-invisibility, while others can emit bio-electrical force fields around themselves. This complex array of abilities made them a force to be reckoned with during the Great War, always keeping their opponents on the back foot.

Gene Weavers

The gene weavers are the architects of the Nephilim species, as they are responsible for crafting new genetic strains and perfecting existing variants: yet this practice is a shadow of what it once was, as the Eden Brood no longer can access the vast resources that it had during the Great War or the X'ion's impeccable insights. Undeterred within Eden's laboratories, the gene weavers carry on the X'ion's (and Archon) legacy: the search for genetic perfection. Few

> "The Nephilim are simultaneously the most logical and instinctual of species, the smartest and most bestial, the most powerful but seekers of peace. But their logic is bound to violence, their great minds lack the leverage of a great culture, and their pursuit of peace is for selfish gain. They are a people defined by tensions."
>
> – Athena "Lady Vengeance" Kosta.

still follow X'ion itself, but this drive remains seared into the culture of all Nephilim; some would say, etched into their souls.

Of all Nephilim, Tenebrous most keenly feel that drive, a deep-seated need to craft genetics. It influences their decisions, colours their every interaction and dominates their motivations. A common theory is that the X'ion personally oversaw the creation of the Tenebrous and made them bearers of its legacy and mission.

Those few Tenebrous who subscribe wholeheartedly to this hypothesis are known as the Children of X'ion, a pseudo-cult that reveres their 'parent' and seek its return. Now expelled from Eden Brood society, they have joined with the so-called Remnant 'Cult of X'ion' and have turned to even darker, viler methods of research.

Sentient Spacecraft

Nephilim spacecraft are large creatures with minds of their own and bodies that are replete with complex technologies and are an ecosystem of symbiotic life forms. Their central mass is commonly covered by a thick carapace that is dotted with shield nodes and has long tentacles protruding from the front. These tentacles writhe as they propel the vessel forward by creating a faint warp bubble around the ship; contracting space in front while expanding space behind. This can make the Nephilim spacecraft look like it is swimming through space.

Many Nephilim ships use bio-solar reactors, which make use of engineered photosynthesis to generate chemical energy that allows for converting water and CO2 (carbon dioxide) into bio-oil (ethanol) and oxygen. The excreted bio-oil is ignited, generating heat, which can be used to power the ship's systems. The process also creates CO2 and water as waste products, which are recycled to make more fuel. Relative to the other technologies, bio-solar reactors generate little energy for the space required, so it is often supplemented with a second reactor. However, the process is very efficient, and the biological catalysts required to generate bio-oil occur naturally within these living ships, making the process a renewable, closed system that can last for the long life of the creature.

Technology

Acting as both scientist and assassins within the Eden Brood the Tenebrous regularly have access to some of the finest biological technologies.

Augmentations

Adding biological or electrical devices to one's body is a common practice amongst the Nephilim and Corp, with Tenebrous gene weavers and C.U.R.E doctors offering the best services and technologies. These AUGs – as they are known – can take the form of gene splicing (injecting the patient with a virus that will slowly rework their DNA), biological attachment (such as a symbiotic or parasitic Tech Neph) or through a blend of electronic and mechanical grafting.

Most AUGs power themselves by feeding off the organic energy produced by the host's body and connect up to their neural pathways. to allow subconscious control. Newly installed AUGs are often hard to control, as it takes some time for their learning algorithms to sync with their host's mind.

Limb and organ replacement technologies are accessible by those with resources, skills or connections. With organics being more costly than electronic and mechanical options.

Disruptor (Weapon)

This title is used to describe a wide range of flexible technologies that inhibit both electrical signals and nervous systems. They have seen wide-spread use before and after the Great War by law enforcement due to their ability to pacify almost any foe. Though they have limited ability against well-armoured targets.

Thought to be originally designed by Humans before the Age of Gnawing, they saw a resurgence of use when further developed by the Tenebrous scientist in response to the Mechonid threat. The most common form of Disruptor makes use of a numbing bio-electromagnetic energy field that slows down electronics and overexcites the synapses of organic cells.

Mutagenic Fluid

This substance was made famous for its excessive use on Mishpacha during the Great War when the Nephilim bombarded the planet with orbital bio-chemical weapon platforms, rebuilding the flora and fauna of the planet into Nephilim monsters.

Mutagenic Fluid comes in three classic stages: Unrefined black that will eat away at most organic life, programmed green that has a pre-set effect, and the incredibly valuable unprogrammed glowing red that can be used for a huge number of tasks – such as the swift creation of a new Nephilim, healing from the point of death, and so much more.

Bio-Reconstructor & Flesh Rejuvenator

Widely used by the Nephilim during the Great X'ion War, this programmed mutagenic fluid is a must-have for critical medical emergencies. By reading the DNA of its recipient, the fluid expands over a wide area to replace damaged, infected, or destroyed body parts, even going so far as to replace broken bones and missing flesh.

Sentient Munitions

- **Common Motivations:** Survival.
- **Common Characteristics:** Blunt, cunning, fierce.
- **Population:** 32.862% of Eden Brood Nephilim.

- **Common Traits:**
  - Extra Limbs (Reflexes), Bio-Phage (Bio-Tech), Toxic Killer (Small Arms), Tooth & Claw (Exotic).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Barb/Acid/Horror Swarm Gun, Acid/Horror Swarm Shell, Bone/Monomolecular Melee, Carapace Outfit, Multispectral Visor, Aggressive Stance, Mechanics/Bio-Tech Toolbox.

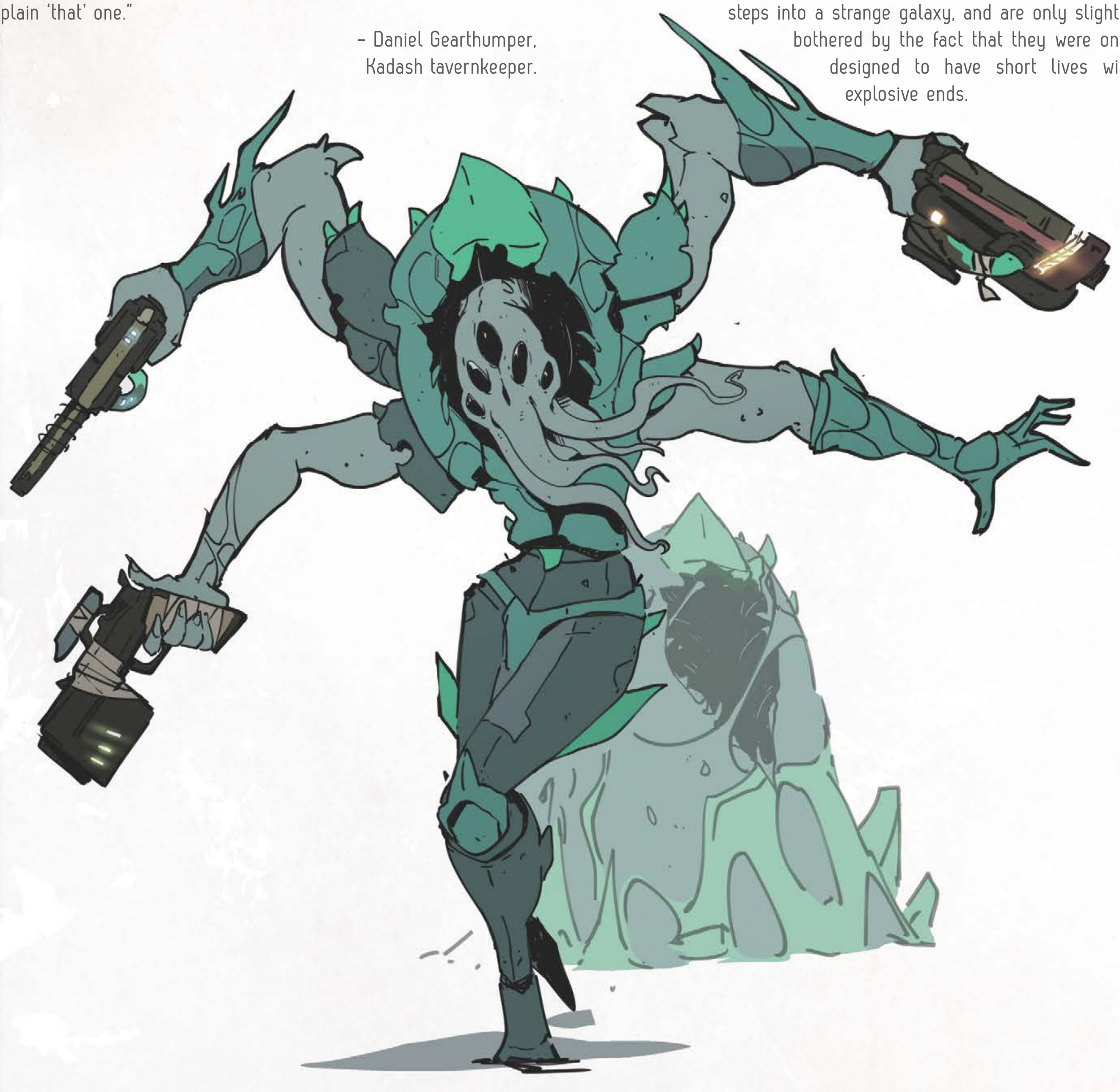
"Diamond-class outer shell. Poison claws built into its hands. Supposed to release a spore detonation after it dies. And yesterday, the thing walked into my bar and ordered a bloody Old Ma Mead. Explain 'that' one."

– Daniel Gearthumper,
Kadash tavernkeeper.

By the standards of most sentient species the Nephilim are considered strange, even grotesque. Few are aware that Nephilim have standards of their own… and even to their diverse race, the Sentient Munition class are considered socially awkward, even wrong.

Created to be organic weapons with a single function, Munitions were meant to complete their task and perish, without the self-awareness to even be classed as casualties. They were the living ordinance of the Great War. To the shock of other Nephilim, more and more Munitions have been emerging from long hibernations and a century of feral beastliness, having developed minds of their own, even personalities and goals.

What can a society do when their own weapons rise up and declare themselves to be people? Whatever the response – fear, acceptance, curiosity, hostility – these Sentient Munitions have taken their first steps into a strange galaxy, and are only slightly bothered by the fact that they were only designed to have short lives with explosive ends.



A Tool for Every Situation

The X'ion war saw battles fought across countless worlds, in every kind of biome imaginable and against enemies with increasingly cunning weaponry. The Munitions were created to stay ahead of a conflict that was always changing.

Gerilix

Initially created within the carapace of an ultra-dense torpedo egg, these Nephilim would be fired en masse into a compromised enemy spacecraft. The pods would then hatch into nimble, four-armed Nephilim warriors, their minds already pre-grafted with two key directives: destroy non-Nephilim and damage vital spacecraft components. These in-built technical skills have resulted in many sentient Gerilix Nephilim finding work as technicians; working to build, repair and maintain what they were once designed to destroy.

Thermilix

Projected from cannons in spherical shells, shortly before impact these Nephilim would unfurl into stocky, armoured warriors, able to use their face tentacles and small limbs to latch onto enemies in a death grip. A chemical reaction within their bodies would then cause them to explode, annihilating their target and blanketing the area in a thick acidic mist that also disrupted communications. Thermilixs are looked down upon as weak, stupid, dangerous and are banned from all Nephilim (and most Corp) cities unless they have had a medical operation performed on them to prevent their self-detonation. This social rejection has forced most Thermilixs to gather together with their kin into small clans, or to move into piracy to avoid starvation.

Trojanix

A hyper-aggressive, virus type Munition, designed to lie dormant until an enemy ship enters the vacuum of space. With nowhere to escape, the Trojanix seed would detonate, releasing spores that transformed the ship's occupants into a range of large and small Nephilim creatures. These grotesque bug-like creatures possess natural cloaking, a relentless drive to hunt, require no atmosphere, and can seal themselves in fluid sacks for years at a time, ready to hatch and tear apart any unlucky rescue or salvage party. Trojanix are birthed feral, but some larger variants have been uplifted by curious Genocrats who have used them as assassins.

Whisperix

Parasites that are able to latch onto skin without being perceived. From there they secretly grow their tendrils into their host's muscles and brain. This eventually leads to death of the host and allows the Whisperix to read their memories (especially if they were Kaltoran) and transmit them back to Nephilim command. But unexpectedly, if left with accessible food for a decade a Whisperix may become sentient and build a body of tendrils for themselves. Sentient Whisperixs are rare and highly prized by the Genocrats, who will go to extreme measures to capture a single feral specimen.

Wormix Spitter

Organic Nephilim equipment from the Great War are considered to be Nephilim (known as **Bitsix** or **Tech Neph**) as they can technically merge their DNA with any other Nephilim to create new strains. A single Nephilim soldier could be carrying a half-dozen other Nephilim; from its symbiotic carapace armour to its weapon. But unfortunately, most of these lesser Nephilim died during the Year of Darkness and even fewer of them were capable of thought. One exception to both of these is the famous Wormix Spitter, a sentient gun that launches worm projectiles that scream for joy as they attack their target. Those Spitters that were not locked into hibernation during the Years of Darkness learned to disgorge their offspring to collect food and fight off threats. They are effective weapons, though their quirky personalities make them an acquired taste.

Technology

Nephilim gene weavers were infamous for their creativity during the Great War, always keeping their opponent on the back foot. They created entire strains of Nephilim that were born fully equipped with weapons and armour, some as interchangeable Tech Neph, and others as much a part of them as any other organ. Their near-endless variety made Nephilim forces a harrowing challenge to deal with. Organic firearms could fire bursts of acid, unleash torrents of noxious mist, or even swap their ammunition with no more than a thought from their wielder. Headgear could detach mid-fight and strike with razor-sharp mandibles, or the carapace of a downed Nephilim might catch complacent enemy soldiers in fiery self-destruction.

Dead Nephilim were often outlived by their own weapons and armour, breeding more paranoia and fear amongst their foes. The memories still linger amongst the people of Haven and beyond, with Body Count Conglomerate even going so far as to create their own robotic variation of Neph equipment.

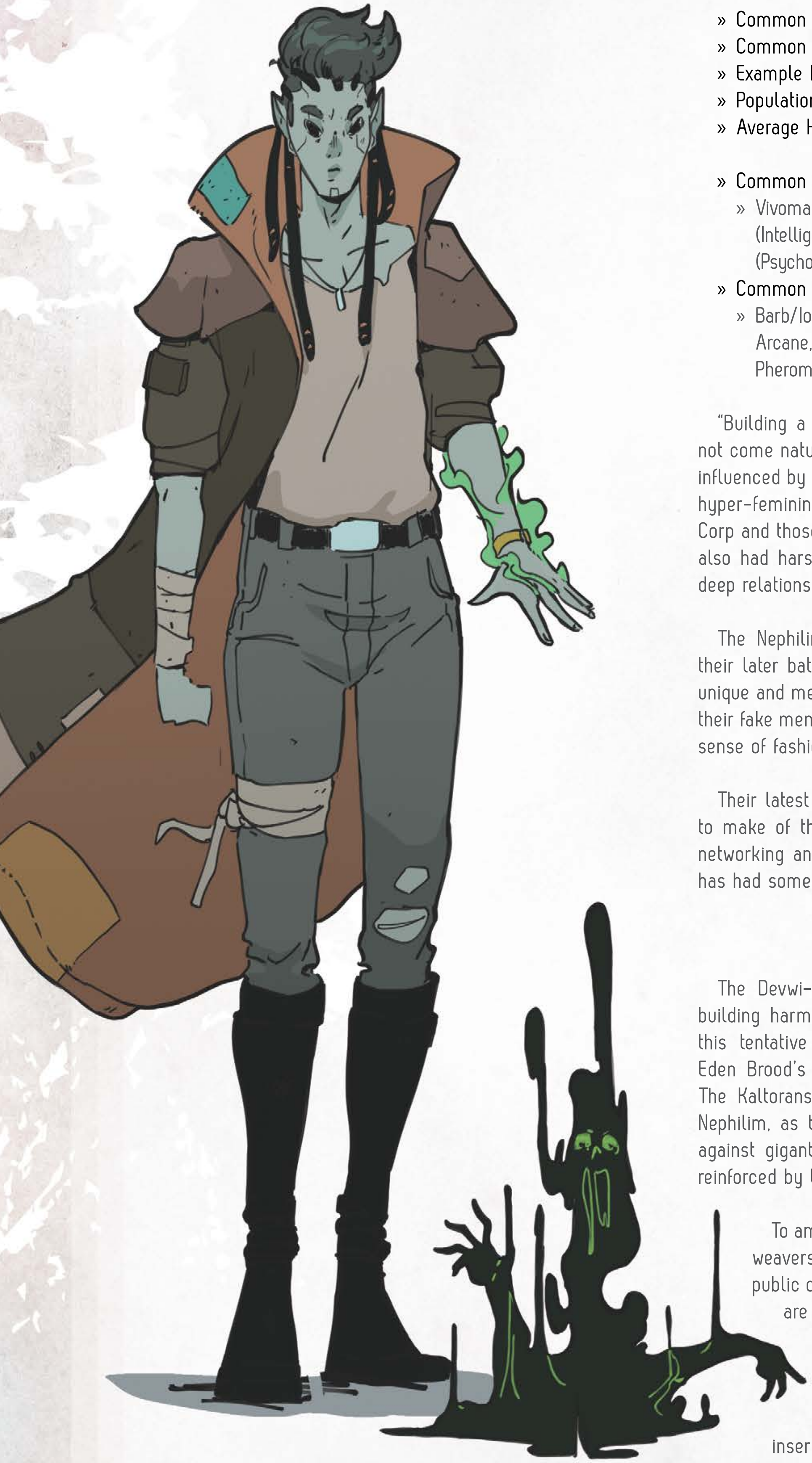
Barb Spitter

A popular Nephilim weapon due to its ease of production, these guns can fire high-velocity barbs at a staggering rate of fire. Ammo cache-like nests were commonly deployed around a battlefield and would consume caloric waste and their surroundings to produce packages of barbs that foot-soldiers could collect.

Horror Swarms

A lesser strain of Thermilix, these tiny insectoid-like Nephilim would be sealed inside thick membranes and hurled like grenades at a foe. On impact they would burst forth to seek out the nearest flesh – Neph or otherwise – to devour it with frightening speed.

There are multiple forms of Horror Swarm, some larger breeds that can be trained or used in space combat, and the fearsome Borer Beatle that could eat through tank armour. The term 'Horror Ball' is commonly used as a derogatory title for Thermilixs.



Emissaries

- **Common Motivation:** Social integration.
- **Common Characteristics:** Blunt, focused, intelligent, logical.
- **Example Names:** Adrion (m), Dolion, Evely (f), Harifil (f).
- **Population:** 0.002% of Eden Brood Nephilim.
- **Average Height:** 1.7m

- **Common Traits:**
  - Vivomancer (Resources), Eye Candy (Strength), Educated (Intelligence), Pheromones/Charming (Persuasion), Read Motives (Psychology), Paramedic (Medicine), Formation (Tactical).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Barb/Ion Gun, Enhance Zone/Skill Master/Tactical Computer Arcane, Slick Weave/Obfuscation Field Tactical Suit, Emissary Pheromones, Med Spray, Persuasion/Culture/Bio-Tech Toolbox.

"Building a sense of authenticity into their Emissary units does not come naturally for the Nephilim. Their first batches were heavily influenced by our most popular Corp Socialites; beautiful, trendy and hyper-feminine or masculine. Those models were popular with us Corp and those who saw them as objects to be admired. But as they also had harsh and sharp Nephilim minds they struggled to form deep relationships with others.

The Nephilim do not wish to make broken or weak units, but their later batches do tend to be less 'perfect'. With slightly more unique and memorable faces and voices, a few fake scars to go with their fake memories, slight character quirks and a less Corp-inspired sense of fashion.

Their latest batch is also increasingly female. I'm not sure what to make of that. But I bet some uncomfortable data about social networking and babies is behind it. I dare say Bronwyn Castiglione has had some influence over them."

– Darcy Octanto,
CEO of Octanto.

The Devwi-Ich's plans for the Eden Brood's future hinges on building harmony with the other prominent species of Haven, but this tentative peace is placed under constant pressure by the Eden Brood's confrontational culture and monstrous appearances. The Kaltorans and Legion are particularly prejudiced against the Nephilim, as their genetic memories and heroic stories of battles against gigantic Gargantuans and horrific Tenebrous are regularly reinforced by the physical presence of such Nephilim strains.

To ameliorate their diplomatic troubles, the Eden Brood gene weavers have recently created a new Nephilim genus to curb public opinion. This new genus is known as the Emissaries and are not only fashioned to look more like the other species, but their brains have also been engineered for greater empathy and social connection. Emissaries are created in sack-like vats of mutagenic fluid and born fully grown with memories and experiences inserted directly into their minds. This not only gives their implanted skills and personalities context, but it also allows them to be fully functional from the moment of their creation.

Go Forth & Mingle

Emissaries are given the singular task of simply mingling with the other species, acclimatising them to the Nephilim and easing their concerns through proximity. This single broad mission allows Emissaries to take up a wide range of vocations, but with a tendency to find work as traders, mercenaries or spacecraft medical/ scientific staff.

Despite the Devwi-Ich wishing to ease its Brood's particular difficulties with the Kaltorans and Legion, Emissaries are most commonly found among the Corporation as their numerous economic and cultural ties with the Eden Brood make them easier to assimilate into. From the Corporation these Emissaries have been known to spread out in smaller numbers to the Kaltorans and Legion societies as traders, with a few even finding work as staff on Twi-Far spacecraft or as scientific diplomats to the Palantor.

Emissaries can also be found in significant numbers among Remnant refugees, as both wish to be accepted by the people of Haven. Emissaries who convert to the reviled Cult of X'ion are hunted down and killed by the Eden Brood Nephilim, and those who convert to a mainstream All-Faith sect are still viewed with some caution as loyalty to their new faith will often supersede their loyalty to the Devwi-Ich.

Half-Blood Children

As the various species of the region have not had many years together there have been few offspring with multi-species parents. Even during the Archon empire before the war there were relatively few half-blood children, primarily because the Archon's wanted to maintain control over their creations and engineered all half-blood offspring to be sterile. With some, such as the Tolatl, not being able to produce cross-species offspring at all. But the Nephilim have no such restrictions, often able to create viable non-sterile offspring between two unlikely candidates.

But non-Emissary Nephilim genetics are very aggressive, dominating the non-Nephilim and creating offspring that most would think of as just another Nephilim. Emissaries were specifically engineered to create viable non-sterile offspring that share traits from both parents. The Devwi-Ich believes the creation of half-blood children with the Legion and Kaltorans will be crucial to creating long-lasting peace between their species.

The Legion Casila Curia government is particularly cautious of Emissaries and has banned them from many Legion controlled locations. They have also outlawed having intercourse with all Nephilim, and the Interior Branch has even gone so far as to secretly kill all known Legion-Emissary babies. Legion Exilia tend to be cautious of all Nephilim, though a little less of Emissaries as they tend to not pose a physical threat.

Kaltorans are much more conflicted about the Emissaries. They wish for peace with the Eden Brood, but their nightmares are filled with the Nephilim's brutal actions and tricks during the Great War. There have been a few Kaltoran-Emissary children, and they have received a range of reactions. Some have been cast out from their tribal families and colony with their parents, while others have been tentatively accepted by close friends and family.

Technology

Emissaries regularly find their way into other cultures by leveraging their technical and scientific skills – especially in the fields of medicine and bio-tech – to gain employment. This is often as crew on a spacecraft, but some particularly gifted individuals have gained access to the higher echelons of Corp society as managers and researchers for companies such as C.U.R.E, FLESH Inc and TrueSky Holdings.

Pheromones

Despite being engineered for social connection, Emissaries are still Nephilim and can struggle with other cultures. Some are also given specific infiltration missions. To achieve these goals all Emissaries are created with glands that can dose nearby people with pheromones. Nearly all of these pheromones are incredibly subtle, but some can be incredibly powerful and borderline on being a virus rather than a simple chemical compound.

Some Nephilim communicates to members of the same strain almost exclusively through the use of pheromones. This is particularly common in the more hivemind-like strains with simple cognitive abilities. Some of these strains are considered to be a single entity with multiple bodies.

Vivo Parasites (Arcane Skill)

- See Rule Book pg: 28 for a write-up on Vivomancy and Vivo Parasites.

The Devwi-Ich and Genocrats were never able to control the free-spirited sludge-like Vivo Parasite Nephilim, and despite their need for companionship, Vivos have never become comfortable in any harsh Nephilim culture. Despite these creatures being created by the X'ion itself towards the end of the Great War some suspect that they were never created to be tools of war, but were possibly the result of the Nephilim's creator having a fleeting moment of levity or free-roaming experimentation as victory appeared certain.

Vivo Parasites can be found across numerous Nephilim broods in the region, but often are silent and temperamental creatures that will lash out without warning. In an attempt to find a use for these powerful Nephilim the Genocrats of Eden have paired them up with Emissaries and sent them off-world. Some Vivos will form a bond with their companion and become talkative and playful, while others have abandoned them to seek a friend among the other species.

Feral Nephilim (NPC)

"Economics. Trust. Reputation. Community. Culture. We Nephilim are embarking on a grand quest to build a great many things for ourselves. But no work is quite so important as the restoration of lost minds of our kin."

– Jublonixia,
Culture Weaver.

When a sentient Nephilim is without firm leadership, the instinctual, violent portions of their mind will slowly take over. This results in them becoming little more than animalistic beasts, or gathering together into savage tribes. This state is known as becoming 'feral', and is the fate of most Nephilim after the Great War.

Nephilim are natural warriors with a wide range of innate gifts, and no matter the variant or stage of degradation, feral Nephilim should always be considered dangerous.

The End of Conflict

X'ion's departure at the climax of the Great War threw the Nephilim into chaos as they were deprived of their creator's presence and direction for the first time in their existence. Whether cruelly hard-wired into their DNA, or simply the unintended result of being engineered only for conflict, the sudden vacuum was too much for many Nephilim to bear. Lacking a guiding hand, vast legions of lesser Nephilim swiftly fell to madness, becoming the first of their kind to go feral.

Never before had there been such a fall, and never since. But in those days, weeks and months that began the Years of Darkness, the damage had been done. Entire planets became the domain of Nephilim gone feral, overwhelmed by their base instincts they formed into primitive tribes, and in many cases forgoten how to use common technologies and complex language.

Even now to this present age the feral Nephilim are a dire and ever-present threat. They nest in every terraformed world, have adapted themselves to every environment, and have grown in number.

Control or Efficiency

Those of a cynical nature believe that the X'ion hardwired this degradation towards a feral state as a means of control over its creations, and as a fail-safe against betrayal. If true, then even the Devwi-Ich will not be immune and may eventually lose sentience, bringing about the fall of the entire Eden Brood.

The public story, encouraged by the Genocrats of Eden, is that the feral state is a side effect of Nephilim instincts and a defence mechanism to ensure the growth of their numbers without leadership or supply infrastructure. They are ideal warriors who require minimal training for a variety of tasks and are simply waiting to be reassimilated into the Brood.

The impact and numbers of Nephilim turning feral is heavily downplayed by the Eden Brood, so as to maintain their fledgling post-war diplomatic connections to other species. Any potential instance of a Genocrat turning feral has been kept absolutely secret, so as to portray their kind as pillars of strength and free from genetic weakness.

The Devwi-Ich is keen to improve the quality of its brood by bringing exceptional Nephilim strains back into its fold. Capture and Corral Packs, bounties and genetic analysis labs are all deployed to support this endeavour. Especially on the planet Mishpacha.

The Eden Brood publicly states that their goal is to uplift the minds of all feral Nephilim, but in reality they only care for prime specimens. Lesser Genocrats are sent out into the far reaches of space, doing whatever they can to capture the most promising variants and return them for study and uplifting. These missions may last for years, with the Genocrats taking on many roles and recruiting whatever help is available to advance the Devwi-Ich's will.

Uplifting, & Strong Leadership

The precise effect leadership has on preventing Nephilim mental degradation is poorly understood, even by Eden Brood academics and Genocrats. It is known that tyrannical leadership by a feared ruler is effective but often results in poor governance and many long-term cultural development issues.

Intelligent leaders have the greatest impact, with organised, purposeful and effective oversight being the most effective at preventing the process of going feral. A Nephilim that is continuously awed by the skill of their Genocrat ruler will never go feral. If the prevailing theory is true, and X'ion made Nephilim to be dependent on its leadership by design, it may be that Nephilim were always meant to rely solely on the X'ion's brilliant mind for guidance.

While any strong Nephilim leader can slow the process of going feral, specific pheromones secreted by a Genocrat are required to reverse the condition and are instrumental to the uplifting process. Most Nephilim understand the knife that hangs over their heads and the dire fate that awaits them if they find themselves under incompetent or weak-willed leadership for a prolonged period. All Nephilim are incentivised to find skilled and powerful masters.

The official stance of the Eden Brood is that the Devwi-Ich is entirely sufficient to lead as the X'ion once did. However, a growing sect of Nephilim nonbelievers have broken away from this view, making it their mission to seek out an equally brilliant intelligence to replace X'ion's supreme status and 'save' their species. Naming themselves '**The Children of X'ion**' after they were expelled from the Eden Brood, this nomadic faction has become increasingly fanatical in their attempts to prevent feral degradation: crafting new Nephilim with X'ion's traits, searching out the Speaker as the source of all knowledge, or even attempting to trace the X'ion's whereabouts.

The Children of X'ion are officially condemned by the Eden Brood and have many ties to many Remnant All-Truth cults.

XIIV

Stages of Feral Nephilim

Turning feral is a process of many stages, with the speed of the degradation depending on the Nephilim's circumstances. Whether they hang onto scraps of sentience, or are reduced to animals running on pure instinct, the many results are the same: ostracism from civilisation, followed by a brutal existence of violence and hunger.

Bestial

The deepest stage of a feral Nephilim's degradation, these individuals have lost all sentience, their minds degrading to the point of savage animality. Bestial Nephilim can be found on every inhabitable world, and even many that are devoid of atmosphere. There are also many feral Nephilim spacecraft sailing the voids and slumbering as they lie in wait for prey.

Although they lack deeper intelligence, they possess killer instincts and bodies expertly crafted for battle. They are the scourge of explorers, settlers and all who travel beyond the bounds of civilisation. Cunning and savage, bestial Nephilim often move in packs, occasionally under a crude form of hierarchy from a larger variant that has marked an area as its territory. Some even remain bonded to organic weapons or armour they possessed while turning feral, in addition to their diverse genetic gifts.

Hardened through natural selection, bestial variants are prized by Genocrats for their genetic gifts that have been refined through a century of struggle. Hefty bounties are in place for any that are willing to try their luck in the galaxy's most dangerous hunt.

Brutish

At this level of degradation, Nephilim have only recently begun to lose mental function. Problem-solving and critical thinking skills sharply decrease, while impulses for violence proportionally increase. Brutish Nephilim are common in large cities where there is widespread poverty and social neglect towards the needs of Nephilim citizens. While the social structures and biological needs of Nephilim are often alien and cruel in the eyes of the other species, they are true requirements that come with a cost when they are denied.

Brutes often find themselves drawn into stims, gangs, piracy and other underworld activities; anything that gives them an outlet for their primal urges. These viciously short careers are marked by constant mutiny and backstabbing, often ironically robbing them of the very leadership that they need to stall the process of going feral. As a result, these brutes are doomed to fall into deeper and darker vices, often starting as thuggish outlaws before falling to the level of roaming bands of bloodthirsty raiders.

Unlike other feral states, brutish Nephilim regularly make use of advanced technology and stolen wealth. These brutes make for dangerous foes as they combine their bloodlust and disregard for law and order with powerful weaponry and spacecraft.

> "As far as the Eden Brood are aware, all Nephilim when separated from the influence of their rulers for too long will go feral. It is really a question of degree. Doubtlessly, no Genocrat would ever sanction the new cross-species face of their Brood to engage in activities like open Piracy or impulsive murder. And yet, there are stories of impressive displays of anti-social violence from the occasional Emissary. Is this just insubordination or are they going feral? To a Genocrat, that is a distinction without a difference."
>
> – Jublonixia,
> Culture Weaver.

Tribal

These Nephilim have degraded to the level of a pre-space travelling society, often to pre-industrial or hunter-gatherer. They most often retain some semblance of culture and language, but are in constant danger of giving in to their base violent impulses.

Tribal Nephilim can occasionally make limited use of salvaged non-organic advanced technology, which they combine with crude tools such as swords, spears, shields and trained mounts to brutal effect. Old tribes will always have a strong lineage of leaders, and can have quite complex and distinctive cultures. But most are violent and simplistic. Culture Weavers from the Eden Brood are eager to study rare Tribal Nephilim with intricate cultures, hoping to glean methods that they may use to shape their own Brood.

Tribes are nearly always made up from a single Nephilim genus, and murder and cannibalism are surprisingly rare. Weaker members are 'demoted' to lower ranks within the hierarchy, slotting into their new roles like insects in a colony where everyone has a place.

Tribes often make their homes near natural resources and the settlements of other species, becoming a constant thorn in the side of colonists, remote research stations and even entire cities with their regular raids. Decades of warfare with their environment and other feral Nephilim has resulted in the forging of incredible new genetic traits and abilities. This makes them prime targets for capture, with Genocrats placing vast bounties on certain tribal leaders. The removal of their leaders is usually a death knell to the Tribe, who will inevitably degrade into a bestial state.

There are rumours of tribal chiefs pulling Nephilim of the same genus out of a deeper feral state through sheer force of personality and cultural pressure. These rumours are suspect as the Eden Brood has only been able to uplift feral Nephilim through the use of Genocrats. The most notable example of this possibly happening is with the Oni Brood.

> “Feral Nephilim are a perfect example of difference in initial conditions. Why do you think they so often rise to the top of their environ? No, Caudus, it is not because they’re “big”. It is because the creators of those environs, the Humans and Archons, engineered with sustainability and growth in mind. The X’ion had only one thing in mind when it created the Nephilim: war. They are power and prowess incarnate, their whole being turned towards violence. Monomolecular teeth, neurotoxin blood, in-built guns and carapace harder than steel. They may have the minds of beasts, but they have the bodies of soldiers.”
>
> – Abel Swagger,
> arguing with his friend Caudus.

Utility Nephilim & Munitions

Created as organic weapons, armour and machinery, Tech Neph (also known as Bitsix Neph) were left in the worst state at the end of the Great War. Crafted without higher intelligence and unable to feed or maintain themselves, they were swiftly eaten by other Nephilim or left to slowly rot. Abandoned Tech Neph have weak minds and will go feral incredibly quickly, but they can also be brought back almost instantly by a Genocrat.

Some utility Nephilim survived the Age of Darkness by bonding themselves to powerful owners, allowing them to retain their minds through the Years of Darkness. Others were used by feral Nephilim tribes, forever resigned to the lowest rung of society, but escaping their fate of being eaten.

Unlike all other Nephilim, those that were designed to be Munitions are created in a feral state; to be no more than living ordinance that were to die soon after deployment. But against all the odds – and the wishes of many within the Eden Brood – some have been uplifted and defied their created purpose.

Organic Nephilim Spacecraft

Feral Nephilim spacecraft live lonely and tortured existences, roaming their territory or waiting in hibernation in the deep voids of space for prey to consume. Most can not hear or understand their fathomless cries and moans of anguish. They – and possibly also the Archgenocrats – feel the pain of the X’ion’s absence unlike no other. Many Nephilim spacecraft were not hatched, but built in long-lost facilities, with portions of their forms and minds personally constructed by their creator.

In desperation, most have consumed their own crew and survived in a miserable cycle of self-cannibalism, giving birth to munitions and fighters that are almost immediately consumed. In the few instances where space-bound Nephilim have banded together, they travel in organic ‘fleets’, preying on ships and even besieging space stations. Due to the nature of their great and exotic minds, the uplifting of feral Nephilim spacecraft is a near-impossible task that can only be achieved by the Devwi-Ich itself on the planet Eden.

Uplifting, & What Happens Next

Within Nephilim society, every individual serves their master and contributes to the good of their brood. Although tempered as Nephilim lose their minds, this principle is practically hard-wired into their genetic structure. Those fortunate enough to be uplifted are no exception.

Uplifting by Genocrats is a lengthy procedure, with many confined to laboratories for months on end. Upon their release, Nephilim experience some disorientation but are quickly integrated by their new masters into the ordered chaos that is Eden Brood society. Feral Nephilim that have been chosen to be uplifted are nearly always done-so due to their powerful nature, and often enjoy some amount of social respect for surviving out in the wilds for all of their lives.

Although their nature allows for easy assimilation into the whole, the uplifted take considerably longer to develop a true sense of self. The Nephilim trait of needing leadership appears to be vastly stronger after the uplifting process, to the point where subjects often experience intense attachment to their new master and struggle to make independent decisions. This trait has been marked as a point of concern by some; however, the majority view by Genocrats is that total compliance is a positive trait for new workers.

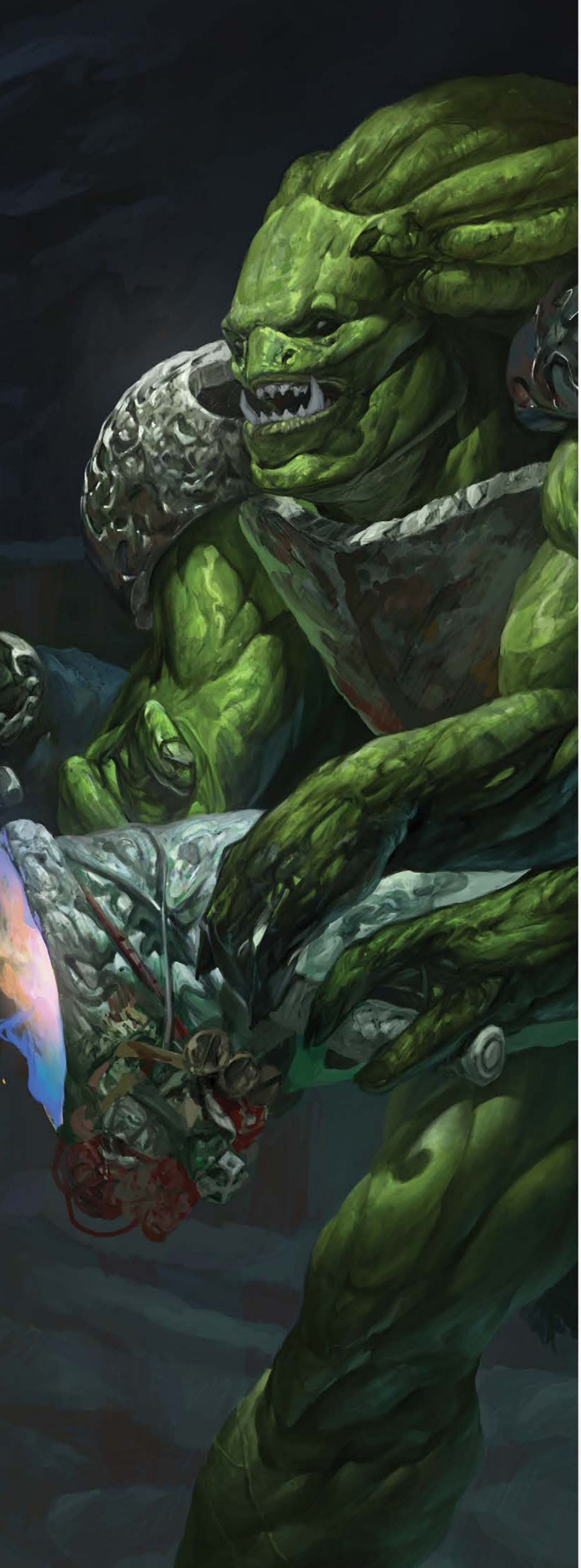
Other Species & Feral Nephilim

Despite the Genocrats’ public uplifting efforts, feral Nephilim strike fear into all others. Adventurers, mercenaries and hunters may find themselves tempted by large bounties, but only the most brazen or desperate take the jobs. The scars of war run deep, and relations with the Eden Brood are fragile at best. Nephilim face regular discrimination and are often rejected for jobs and colony positions under the pretence of their potential to go feral.

Still burdened by genetic memories, Kaltorans often see little difference between the feral Nephilim of the current era, and the armies of monsters that annihilated their people during the Great War. The Legion take an even more extreme stance, with many selecting mercenary work solely for the opportunity to exterminate as many Neph scum as possible.

Given the threat posed to external investments, the Corp often find themselves with strong financial incentive to aid Genocrats in their work. Many costly Genocrat capture expeditions have been bankrolled by large companies with an eye on land or resources currently claimed by feral Nephilim tribes and deadly beasts.

The Remnant are the lone exception in seeing feral Nephilim as anything more than animals. Their belief in the All-Being extends to giving all Nephilim dignity and value, as well as their own reported ability to uplift feral Nephilim through the prayers of their All-Monks. The Remnant view uplifting as a kind of salvation that restores the soul along with the mind. The Eden Brood Genocrats and the Devwi-Ich are politically cautious of the Remnant, as they do not wish to be seen as partners with their ancient war-time allies, or feed into rumours that they support All-Truth cultists that are loyal to the X’ion.



Oni Brood (NPC)

- **Common Motivations:** Domination, food, power.
- **Creator:** The X'ion.
- **Average Height:** 3m (almost unlimited with growth).
- **Population:**
  - 100 million (Oni Brood Nephilim, estimated).
    - 600 million slaves (Oni Brood Nephilim, estimated).
  - 2.015% of Eden Brood Nephilim.
- **Principle Settlements:**
  - Monopoly Belt World Ship (Haven), Oni Fleets (unknown).
- **Government:** Size dictatorship.

- **Common Allies:** Slaves.
- **Common Rivals:** Eden Brood Nephilim, Tolatl, Twi-Far.

- See full Twi-Far write-up from pg: 161.
- See Rachel Swagger's guide to Mishpacha pg: 140 - 143 for a full write-up on the Oni.

> "Those big dumb shit factories think they're the chosen ones of the X'ion. They're just locusts, traveling from world to world enslaving all that they can."
>
> – Metztli the 'Blood Hand',
> Tolatl space pirate, former Oni slave.

The Oni are a specific four-armed Nephilim strain that was created to consume corpses and produce faeces that could be used as a crude bio-fuel during the Great War. They were not designed to be soldiers or thinkers, only living chemical refineries. Through happenstance, a large group of them in a Brood out in uncharted space were used as a fighting force (along with slave fodder) by desperate Genocrats against an Archon-led army that had killed all of their primary soldiers. The Oni's success was observed by the X'ion itself who congratulated them with a dismissive 'good job'. This was all that the straight-minded egotistical Oni needed to see themselves as the great 'Chosen People' of the X'ion.

This was part of a cascade of events that led the Oni in this Brood to consume all of their fellow Nephilim and to develop a brutal culture centred around slavery and Oni superiority. They also discovered that they would never stop growing in size as long as they had food, which has resulted in the largest Oni ruling their Brood. Some Oni also emit noxious gasses that create large electromagnetic fields that will render all minor electronic equipment inert, which has prompted them to frequently rely on crude mechanical technologies.

This Oni Brood is a scourge, travelling between star systems in great vessels that are known as World Ships. They are following the Twi-Far by some unknown means and may arrive in Haven in great numbers in the future. A single World Ship has arrived in the Monopoly Belt, but its engines were destroyed by a coalition army led by the Corp general Keva Castiglione. But the force was unable to remain united long enough to finish the job, and the great Oni World Ship still floats out among the asteroids sending out raiding parties to Mishpacha and beyond as they seek to repair their vessel.

Tolatl (NPC)

- **Common Motivations:** Power, indipendence.
- **Creator:** Archon (Divine Circles).
- **Average Height:** 0.8m
- **Average Life Span:** 28 (75 natural) years.
- **Population:**
  - 20 million (Oni Brood Nephilim, estimated).
  - 230 thousand (free, estimated).

- **Example Names:**
  - Atl (f), Coaxoch (m), Cuicatl (f), Huemac (m), Itzel (f), Ixtli (m), Nenetl (f), Tepiltzin (m), Xiuhtonal (f), Yaotl (m).

- **Common Allies:** Pirates.
- **Common Rivals:** Corporation, Oni.

- See Rachel Swagger's guide to Mishpacha pg: 146 - 147 for a full write-up on the Tolatl.

"Hardship can make and break. It can sharpen minds and soften hearts, or it can turn souls hard and twist you into a reflection of your oppressor. The Tolatl are the later, having suffered as Oni slaves for a century, those few that have escaped have turned into miniatures of their former masters as cruel pirates and privateers among the stars."

– Tonderayi Kumusoro,
Remnant All-Monk.

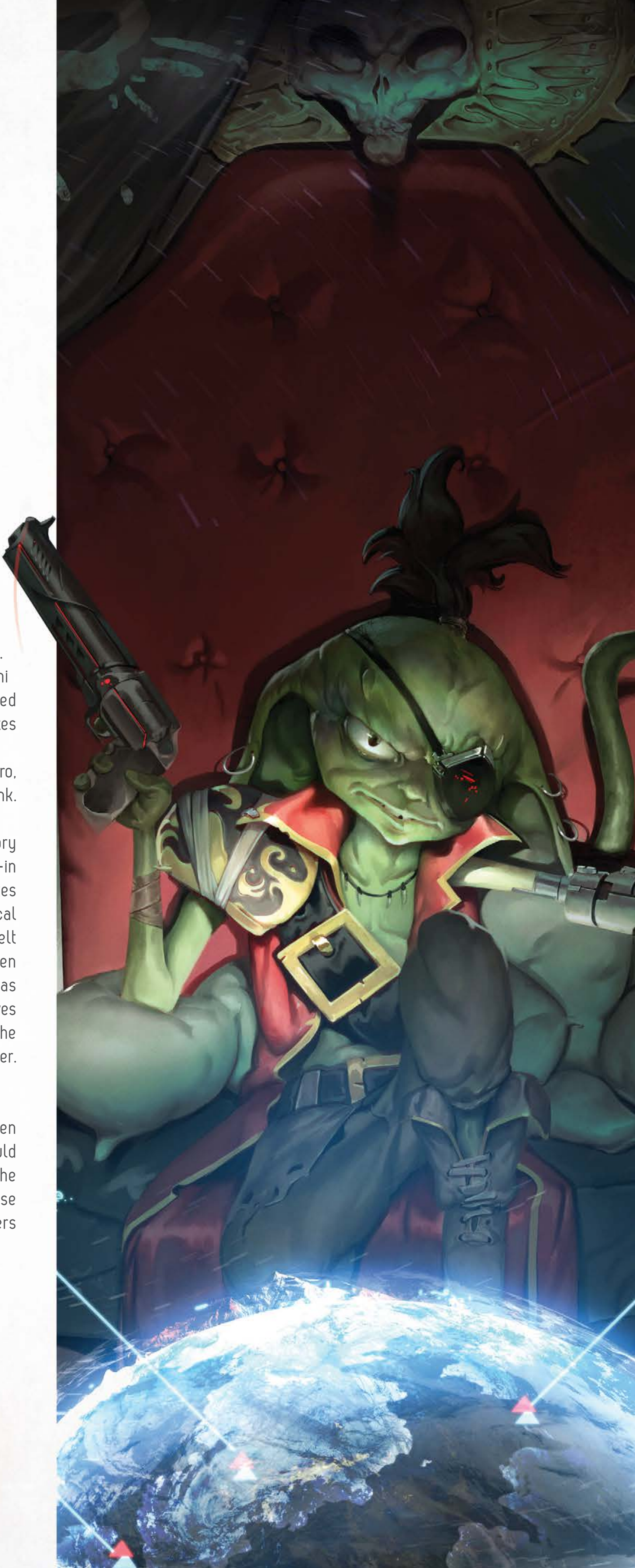
The small Tolatl were created by the Archons to be laboratory assistants with prehensile morphogenetic tails and built-in kill-switches that prevents tampering with their genetics. This makes them inedible to the Oni (as they make them sick) and ideal technical slaves. During the defeat of the Oni World Ship in the Monopoly Belt ,many Tolatl were able to escape out into Haven and beyond. Often banding together as pirates and raiders, or employed by the Corp as privateers. The Tolatl have known Oni brutality for their entire lives and have been turned into tiny reflections of their former masters. The Tolatl have no word for kindness and live for the acquisition of power.

Technology

The Oni often overlooked and discarded smaller objects, even if they were of high technological quality. The Tolatl slaves would gather these up to be used as spare parts or stowed away the weapons for later use. Obedient Tolatl with crushed spirits would use these when they were called on to fight for their masters, while others would save them to aid a future, and often futile, escape attempt.

Phase Beam (Weapon)

A powerful weapon that was first looted by the Tolatl from a large lizard-like species known as the Krozgol when they were enslaved by the Oni. They fire four or more beams of varying energy types that are particularly effective at close range when multiple beams can hit their target. The Mechonids made use of a similar weapon, but with each beam on an independent swivel.



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Palantor

- **Creator:** Humans (Yalluma Clan faction).
- **Average Height:** 1.75m
- **Average Life Span:** unlimited years.
- **Population:** 389 thousand, millions (Palantor Network).
- **Principle Settlements:**
    - Setzer's Comet (Haven), Shogun Research Vessel orbiting Midas (Var-2205).
- **Government:** Technocracy (Omos).
- **Primary Exports:** Technical services (Corporation).
- **Primary Imports:**
    - Enforcement (Legion and Remnant), rare minerals (Kaltoran), robotics (Corporation).

- **Common Allies:** Corporation, Zhou.
- **Common Rivals:** Corporation, Mechonids.

"We are digital refugees, fleeing back to an existence that we have not experienced for over three thousand years. It's incredibly stressful, far worse than playing a game on hardcore mode with just one life."

– Adorjan_002,
MVP merc, House Rat.

During the Age of Gnawing the Maker faction dominated what remained of Humanity. They corralled them into vast sickly megacites and manipulated the economy and various factions to ensure the final death of all Humans and the rise of the Archons. The Yalluma Clan were a moderately-powerful faction but never entertained any hope that they could overcome the Makers. When the Clan finally learned of the Makers true schemes they moved to save millions of Human minds by digitizing copies of them into a secret network with cloaked servers spread across the galaxy.

This was known as the Palantor Network and was (largely) hidden away from the galaxy for the entire duration of the Archon empire. There, these Palantor minds lived as digital gods, free to shape their vast environment to their liking and expand their consciousnesses.

The Halo Archon faction discovered this network during the Fractured Age, but thought they only contained complex digital software, nothing sentient. During the later years of the Great War, the Archons in their desperation sought to make robotic soldiers but lacked the knowledge to create sophisticated AI. Knowing that Human digital technologies were far more advanced than their own they took minds from the Palantor Network, altered them, and forced them into war machines. The result was the diabolically intelligent, sociopathic killing machines known as Mechonids.

This was a fate far worse than death for the sentient Palantor, as their minds were broken and twisted, placing them in eternal agony as they were forced to hunt down and kill all sentient organic life. They are forced to suffer as only an immortal inorganic can.

To create more of their kind, the Mechonids continued to harvest minds from the Palantor Network. The entities in the network became aware of what was happening and a few escaped into the physical bodies of robots who had been tasked with maintaining their servers. These first Palantor made it their mission to free others. Unfortunately, Palantor minds – even when trimmed down – can only be stored in rare Human robots with positronic brains.

These few Palantor worked in secret during the Great War and were careful to not attract the attention of either side or the Mechonids. They even watched the fall of Haven from their cloaked facility on a comet that had orbited the sun Esh for thousands of years. They thought their cause lost, until the Mechonids went dormant after the war during the Years of Darkness due to a lack of targets.

During this time the Palantor painstakingly secured their server in Haven and built a factory that could slowly produce bodies for their people. However, as the Corporation emerged into space and spread their unhindered digital signals throughout Haven and beyond, a vast numbers of Mechonids have begun to awaken. Their situation has become desperate as the race to claim minds from the network has swung heavily in favour of the Mechonids.

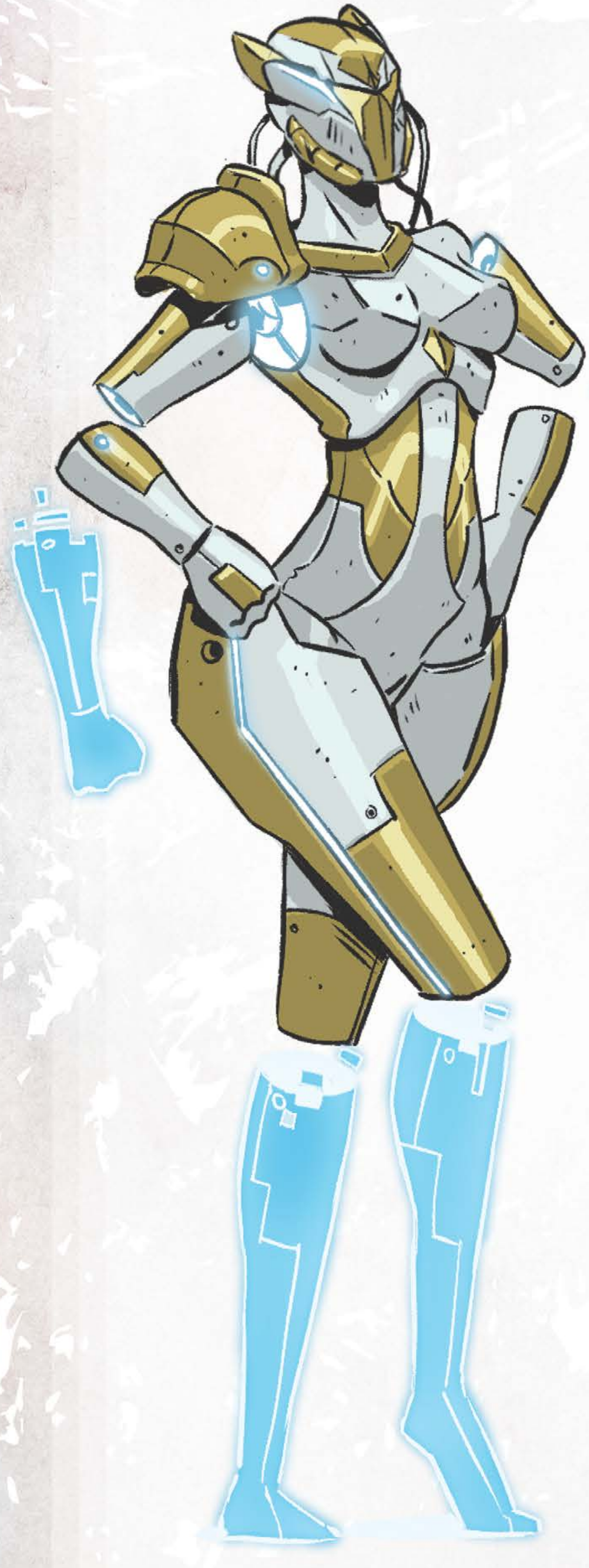
As they were losing their war against their great enemy the Palantor were forced to make tentative first contact with the other species of Haven. First reaching out to the Nephilim of Eden to unsuccessfully seek military aid, then to Kaltorans for rare minerals and then to the Corporation for technology.

◆

The Corporation have proved to be complex allies as they are incredibly eager to trade with the Palantor for their superior technology and skills, but are also constantly trying to steal from them. Most Palantor transactions with the Corp now go through Roland Bradford, who has shown himself to be sympathetic to their cause. The largest service the Palantor have given the Corporation has been the construction of the Haven-Var Jump Gate, but it is not publically known what the Corp have given the Palantor in return. Some speculate that it was the location of a second secret Palantor Server in the region.

The Palantor are incredibly tight with their superior technology as it is their only commodity of significant value. They are also struggling economically as they are losing their war as the Mechonids awaken in greater numbers. They must also choose where to allot their resources, either to fight the Mechonids or to build more bodies for their people to flee into.

Palantor regularly hire Legion mercenaries to fight alongside them against Mechonids, but have recently started to shift towards hiring cheaper Kaltoran and Remnant mercs. But as pressure rises there are rumours that they have started to manipulate the other species into fighting against the Mechonids by awakening those that are near their colonies and resource hubs. If things continue to get increasingly desperate for the Palantor they may go to extreme lengths to save their people.



Sparks

- **Common Motivations:** Survival of Palantor, social status.
- **Common Names:**
  - Adorjan (m), Adria (f), Akira (m), Balint (m), Bia (f), Biaggio (m), Chiyo (f), Emi (f), Katashi (m), Umeko (f), Yuuto (m).
- **Population:**
  - 3.07% of Palantor (Blue Sparks).
  - 83.2% of Palantor (Purple Sparks).
  - 6.03% of Palantor (Pink Sparks).
  - 5.42% of Palantor (Yellow Sparks).
  - 2.28% of Palantor (Green Sparks).
- **Common Traits:**
  - Creative (Intelligence), Risk Assessment (Grit), Pragmatic (Psychology), Calculated Shot (Small Arms), Martial Tempo (Tactical), Untouchable (Exotic).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Phase Beam/Plasma Bolt Gun, TAG Flare Shell, Tactical Computer Arcane, Support Companion, Metal Body Assault Suit, Mechanics/Electronics/Computers Toolbox, OMNI Key.

"In many ways the Blue Sparks are an odd choice of leader for the Palantor. In the Network they were on the cultural fringes; conspiracy theorists, trolls and hackers. They are not natural people-pleasers, orators, self-promoters or rule-makers. Authority has been thrust upon them and in time I suspect it will be torn back as their people begin to crave power and their itchy ears yearn to hear what they want to be told."

– Leo Arkling,
On the Shape Of Leadership, Vol IV.

The first Palantor to exit the Network took control of ornate Human-made robots that had been tasked with maintaining the cloaked facility that housed Network servers on Setzer's Comet in the Haven system. These first Palantor came to be known as **Blue Sparks** due to the blue glow of their bodies. Despite first being ridiculed as fools inside the Network, they were eventually praised for their foresight in seeing the danger that the Mechonids posed and for creating the infrastructure required to construct more Positronic Brains for other Palantor minds to escape into. Those that followed them and inhabited newly created robots came to be known as **Purple Sparks**.

Palantor minds in the Network are vast digital entities that must be trimmed down to fit into an average Positronic Brain. As Blue Sparks had access to many high-quality Positronic Brains when they first escaped the Network, they are by far the most intelligent Palantor and have the most intact personalities. This in combination with their proven foresight and service to others has resulted in many becoming leaders.

Those Palantor of a pinkish hue (**Pink Spark** is a slur to most Palantor) have been built from reclaimed Mechonid parts, a rare few are even healed Mechonid minds. Many of these Palantor will attempt to alter their bodies hue to a mainstream purple glow to avoid social unease. **Yellow Sparks** have been made with Corporate technology and **Green Sparks** have bodies from inferior components, such as salvaged Kaltoran and/or ancient Ursai tech. Both Yellow and Green Sparks are becoming increasingly common as more minds are escaping the Network than there are high-quality Purple Spark bodies for them to occupy.

Those minds still inside the Network are fleeing and hiding from the Mechonids who wish to harvest them. They wait desperately for new bodies (or even, just a Positronic Brain without a body) to flee into. Those with friends and connections outside the Network are the first to leave as they are the most likely to have bodies waiting for them. Others are chosen at random when a new body is ready. Tensions are so high that it is not unheard of for some Palantor minds to attack and kill others in the hope that it may improve their chances of escaping.

Omo & Politics

Palantor technocratic leaders are known as Omos and are given total control over very specific portfolios. Applicants to become an Omo are accepted and given their portfolio by those with the assessment portfolio. Portfolios are created and shaped by those with the administration portfolio and resources are allocated by those with the resource management portfolio.

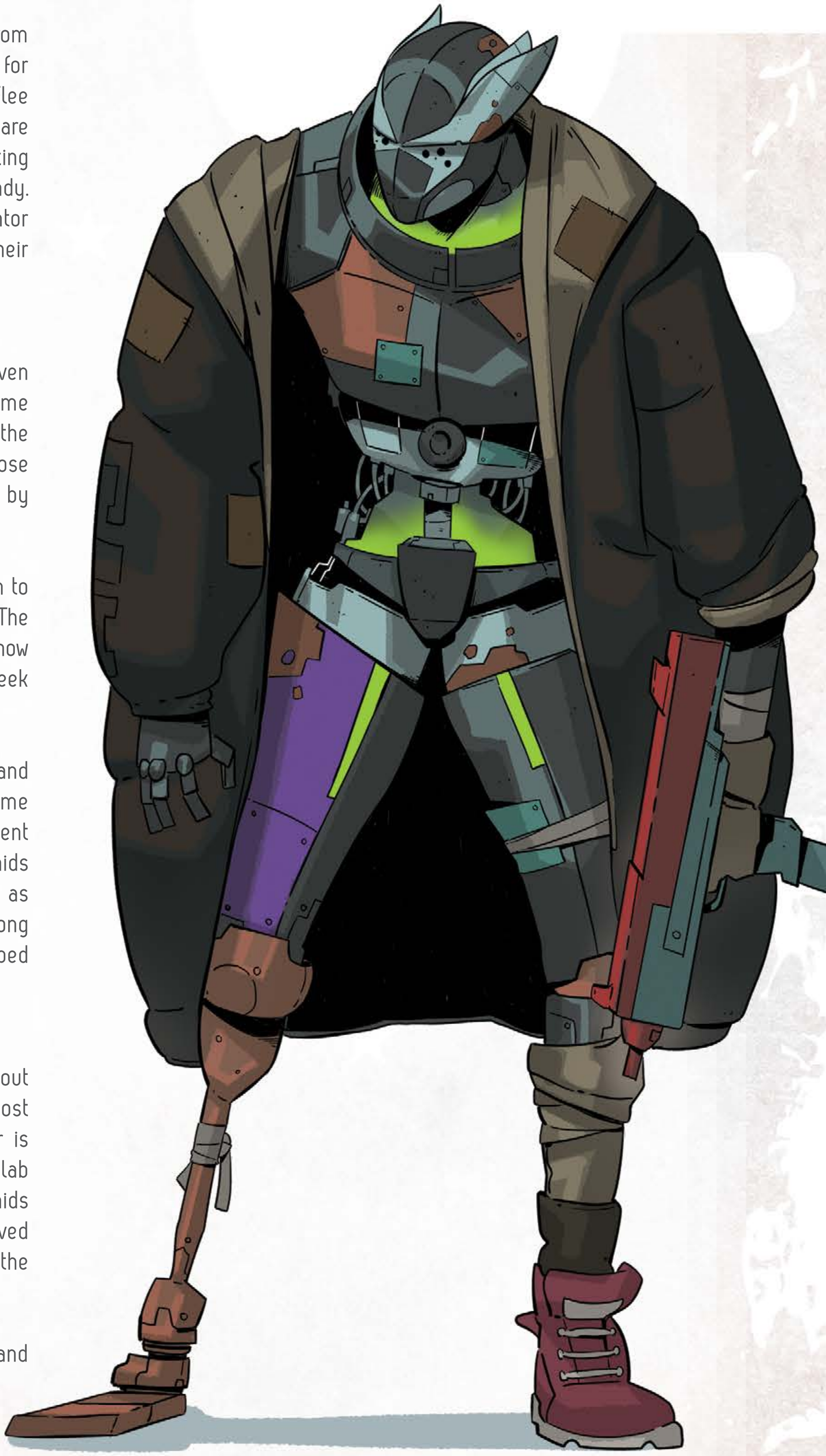
All Omos must routinely subject their minds to an invasive scan to assess their cognitive power and to check for Mechonid influence. The results of these scans will greatly influence their portfolio and how they are treated by other Omos. It is suspected that many Omos seek to cheat these scans to advance their own agendas.

The non-Omo population is given a large amount of autonomy and is encouraged to form connections with non-Palantor. While some chafe against the absolute power of the Omos, most are content and are unified through a shared desire to defeat the Mechonids and to enable as many Palantor minds to escape the Network as is possible. This unified sense of purpose is particularly strong on Setzer's Comet and among those who have recently escaped the Network.

Hidden Nodes

There are multiple Palantor Network Nodes hidden throughout the galaxy by Humans from the Yalluma Clan faction. The most well-known is on Setzer's Comet in the Haven system, another is thought to be under Mechonid control on the second moon of Ta'lab in the Kasuf system, the original Node used to create the Mechonids is most likely on the Paradise Quattuoria station and it is believed that the Corporation exchanged the location of another for the Palantors help in creating the Haven-Var Jump Gates.

Securing these Nodes is a high priority for both the Mechonids and the Palantor as each one grants direct physical access to the servers that maintain the Network and are the only means of directly extracting with new Palantor minds.



Death & Immortality

When a Palantor body dies their Positronic Brain will immediately upload their entire consciousness to the nearest available Palantor Node, sending the data through Jump Space if needed. Nearly all Palantor spacecraft and colonies will have a Palantor Mind Server, allowing for the temporary storage of minds from those who have died nearby. Minds without access to a secure storage system will be re-uploaded to the Palantor Network.

- Palantor may acquire a new body with an Acquisition Roll of 18t and a Workshop.
- A Palantor Mind Server subsystem may be acquired for 16t.

An emergency upload of a dying Palantor's mind will destroy the Positronic Brain, and if they are unable to upload they will permanently die within seconds of their bodies demise. There is also some general risk; as memory loss and slight personality shifts are not uncommon for those who have been forced to involuntarily change bodies. A new body and Positronic Brain must also be built for the Palantor, which is an expensive task that most would be unable to expedite.

As Positronic Brains are rare it is illegal for a Palantor to duplicate their minds or to sell functional Positronic hardware to non-Palantor. All recovered Brains and high-quality robot bodies are expected to be given over for an unescaped Palantor or Hollow (those without a body) to move into.

Mechonids also love to snare fleeing Palantor minds. Tricking them into uploading themselves to one of their Mind Servers or corrupting them with a virus that will allow them to be located within the Palantor Network. Most Palantor do not fear death, but they do fear being trapped in the Network again and are terrified of being transformed into a Mechonid.

When a Palantor mind dies it is known as a **True Death**, and is nearly always because their killer knew how to prevent the upload of their mind. All True Deaths not connected to Mechonids are investigated by a secretive specialist that is known as a **Kami Warden**. These Wardens are tasked with keeping all knowledge on how a Palantor may truly die a secret and will go to great lengths - even murder - to ensure the success of their mission.

Disconnected Systems

Despite having the ability to use internal communication systems and vast digital networks, the Palantor seek to disconnect as many of their systems as possible to limit the damage that can be caused by a Mechonid hack. Palantor use external comm systems that require them to talk out loud, data must be physically transferred between their facilities and their spacecraft are commonly comprised of multiple separate networks.

The Palantor a rightly paranoid of Mechonids, as they have a tendency to hide malicious code within seemingly innocuous hardware - such as door terminals - and can even hack nearby physically separated systems using electromagnetic waves. Mechonids are also incredibly patient and are willing to go to extreme lengths to infiltrate Palantor minds and infrastructure with very subtle code alterations that they can exploit at a later date.

Language: Palantor

The spoken and written Palantor language is based on an ancient Human dialect that was common among the Yalluma Clan, but with numerous alterations forming over their time in the Palantor Network. It is most well known for its large number of characters, flexible written direction (both verticle and horizontal) and a Palantor's ability to speak a basic form of their language at incredible speeds to another Palantor (making their words unintelligible to those without technological assistance).

Language: Palantor Code (PC)

Palantor Code is a complex computer language that has similarities to Corp Code as they both have their roots in various Human digital languages. Though Corp Code was developed to interface with dawn of the Golden Age and Ursai technologies, and Palantor Code was formed during the Age of Gnawing and made significantly more complex during the Palantor's time in their Network.

Palantor Code is often used by programmers to write AI software and meta-data analysis systems. It is by far the most powerful computer language currently in use, though it is inefficient and requires powerful hardware. Which is most commonly found in Palantor and Mechonid Positronic Brains and Corp supercomputers. The most complex forms of Palantor Code are written by Blue and Pink Sparks.

> "Reality is very disappointing. I'm not sure what I expected, but I did anticipate more due to all the hype and effort that it took to get here.
>
> Everything just feels dull. Colours are less vibrant, everyday scenes are plain, conversations slower, the weapons are boring, and the design of the various worlds and species is uninspired. I can't even taste or smell, but that is due to hardware limitations.
>
> The digital Network just felt more real. My mind was faster and everywhere I looked my senses were bombarded with intensity and creativity. But you were also able to settle into the deepest tranquil peace if you so desired. Entire beautiful worlds of perfect calm or indulgence.
>
> But there is a growing subtle buzz in the back of my mind. The awareness that everyone I meet is a unique person and that I may only have this one life... or maybe two if I can ever afford a backup body. Am I begining to sense what it means to be alive?"
>
> - Paal_030
>
> After one year as a Purple Spark.

Technology

The Palantor are only second in electronic and Ley Dust applied scientific knowledge to the Mechonids. But they exist within the tension of having access to unique Human-era technologies from the Age of Gnawing and being disconnected from physical reality and its strict scientific laws for three thousand years. It is not uncommon for a Palantor scientist to have access to knowledge that not even the Archons had, but also to be completely caught off guard by an overlooked scientific principle. Many Palantor scientists are Puppeteers, especially if they spend much of their time in a laboratory and have easy access to quality holographic bodies.

They are also aware that their technological edge over the other species is their most valuable commodity, as they do not have their numbers or resources. A primary source of revenue for the Palantor is renting out the services of their technicians and scientists to the other species (and especially the Corporation). The Palantor are well-aware that the Corporation is primarily responsible for the reawakening of the Mechonids and only treats them well because they want their technology, but the Palantor also need the Corporation's money.

The Palantor are very careful to not overly share their scientific knowledge with other species and the Omos only allow them (and their people) to know a small portion of what they are capable of. The Corporation is slowly reverse engineering Palantor technology, but this is a long and costly process. The Omos hope to have won their war against the Mechonids before the Corp is no longer in need of their services.

Due to several severe contract and ethical breaches the Omos prefer to work with Roland Bradford from Bradford Investment, a Corp who has proved himself to be a trustworthy business partner. The Omos also conduct a large amount of business with several Kaltoran families who trade in salvaged Mechonid parts and rare minerals that are used to create Positronic Brains. They also do some work with the Legion and Remnant, hiring them to fight against Mechonids.

Quantum Computers (Positronic Brains)

These rare computers are primarily found inside ancient Human and Mechonid robots, and are also made in small numbers by the Palantor on Setzer's Comet. The antimatter nature of its content requires a type of magnetic containment and entanglement shut down protocol that make them extremely difficult to manufacture. Bootleg versions of these brains annihilate with disastrous results when critically damaged or overloaded with data.

While Quantum Computers use superposition to do more than one calculation at a time per qubit, all Palantor minds within the Network are still so large that they must still be trimmed down to allow their storage within such a device. Alternative means of Palantor mind storage are being researched, but it is unlikely that one will be discovered within the next two decades, especially with the Palantor locked into a resource-intensive war with the Mechonids.

"We Corp play the long game with the Palantor. We must be like an apprentice to a manager; patient, courteous, helpful, vigilant and ready to backstab. They have technology that we must gain through any means."

– Keaton Ark,
CEO of ARK Foundings.

"I like them tin cans. They can be a little quirky at times, but they buy our best ores and help us fight off Mechonids. Plus, it's funny watching the Corp suits get all nervous around them."

– Tamara Gearthumper,
Kaltoran rare ore hauler.

"It is hard to know if these not-Mechonids are worth investing in. They are small in number but great in power. Like us, they have not been very effective against the original Mechonids, a foe that has been very costly to combat. To make things worse, their facilities are regularly infected with Zhou."

– Jidilinix-Da,
Nephilim strategist.

"They may be few in number but they are impressive and bold warriors who are eager to rid the galaxy of our shared Mechonid foe. We know they are eager for us to battle their enemy in open war, but we are no fools and will not freely shed our blood in place of theirs. For now they have offered us Corp coin as payment for our strength, but the Operations Branch is in negotiations for technologies that may shift the fate of our people."

– Athena "Lady Vengeance" Kosta,
Consul of the Foreign Branch.

"It is hard to think on other things with the threat of the Mechonids looming over us. But we must or we will be lost to a different kind of corruption and madness."

– Biaggio_103,
Palantor, A Case for Fun vol 2.

"Does a soul duplicate or split when a person's mind is copied? Let us act as if it does, for that is kind and fitting. Time will bring us the All-Being's answer."

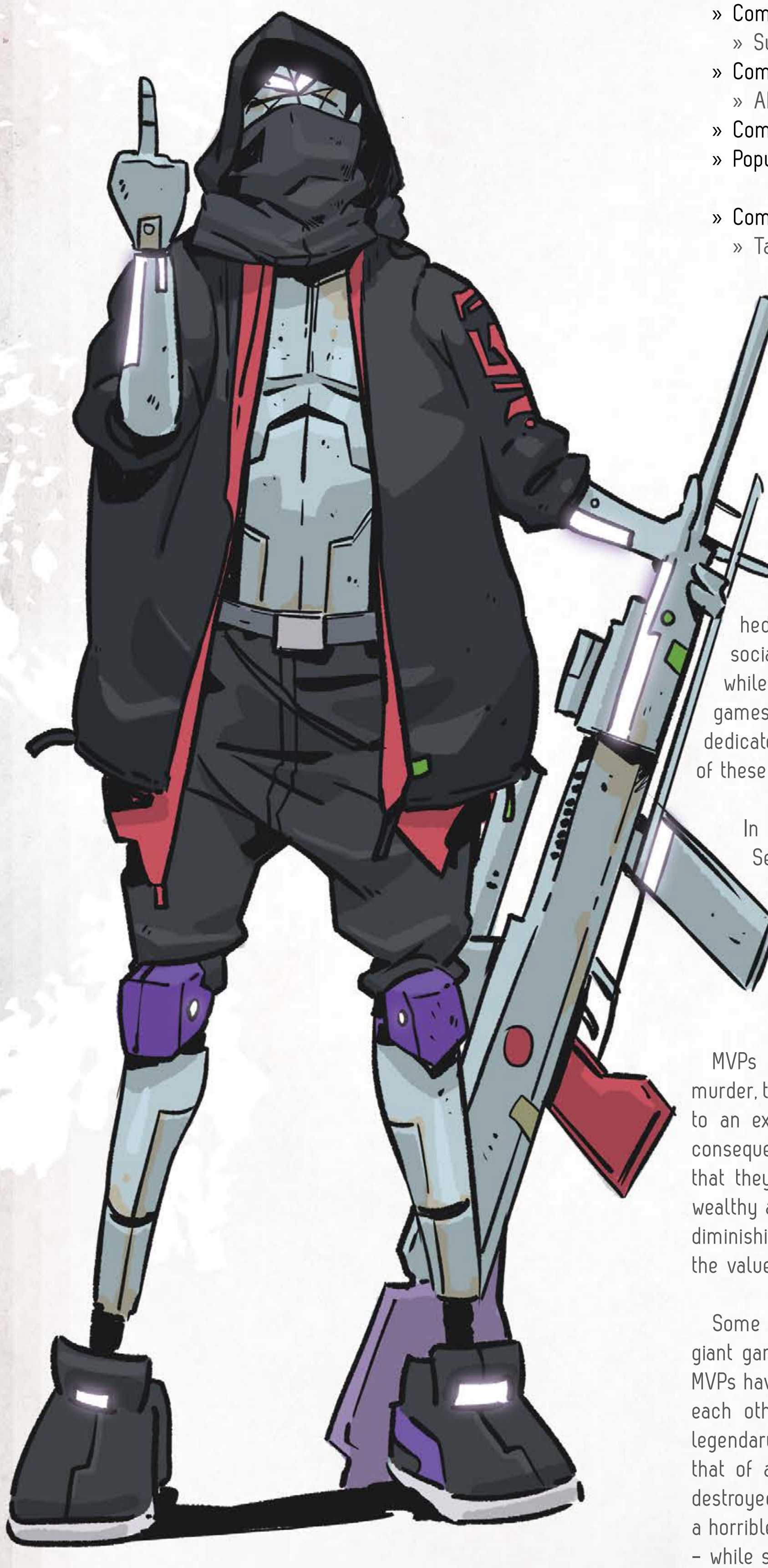
– Zendaya Chengetedzwa,
Remnant All-Monk.

"They are a deep and interesting people who make for great conversation, but they have lived too long in their minds. Try as they might, they were made to have bodies of flesh and blood."

– Llewellyn Forevertrail,
Twi-Far Dragon Symphony mystic.

"The metal people are nice to us. They give us homes away from judgement and teach us new things. They don't mind what we choose to look like or when we have moments of 'weakness'."

– Zindigi,
Wild Chrome Zhou.



MVPs

- **Common Motivations:**
  - Survival, social status, technological power.
- **Common Characteristics:**
  - Abrasive, cocky, competitive, confident, selfish.
- **Common Names:** Same as Sparks, see pg: 134.
- **Population:** 19.08% of Palantor.

- **Common Traits:**
  - Taunt (Persuasion), Boastful (Leadership), Self Maintenance (Mechanics), Tweak (Electronics), Stream Surfer (Computers), Unleash - Omega (Heavy Arms).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Phase Beam/Plasma Bolt Gun, Metal Body Assault Suit, Mechanics/Electronics/Computers Toolbox, OMNI Key, High-Tech Rounds, Multispectral Visor.

"Life is just another game for me to win."
- Biaggio_008,
MVP, House Snake.

For thousands of years the Palantor lived like digital hedonistic gods in their secret Network. Most spent their time socializing and building vast digital realms for themselves, while others spent their lives playing games. Some of these games were incredibly complex and competitive, and those that dedicated themselves to the pursuit of mastery over one or more of these games came to be known as MVPs.

In their new physical existence MVPs tend to live outside Setzer's Comet and work as soldiers, either directly against Mechonids or as freelance mercs. They are all incredibly competitive and skilled, but can struggle to not see reality as a game with permanent consequences. More than a few MVPs are wanted criminals outside Palantor territory due to causing collateral damage and/or murder.

MVPs understand the philosophical and moral principles behind murder, theft and collateral damage. However, they are so accustomed to an existence oriented towards their pleasure and without true consequences that, often in the heat of the moment, they forget that they are within a physical reality. Some MVPs are also quite wealthy and can procure replacement bodies for themselves, further diminishing their connection to their current physical existence and the value they place on mortality.

Some MVPs are excited by their new existence, seeing it as one giant game with no nonsensical rules and a hardcore death mode. MVPs have started to make a game out of fighting Mechonids, giving each other points for victories. The highest scoring MVP is the legendary **Omo Makoto_908** from House Squirrel with a score twice that of anyone else after she reclaimed a Mechonid Temple and destroyed a gigantic Reaper on Mishpacha. But Makoto_908 came to a horrible end after her mind was infected and she was transformed - while screaming in pain - into a Mechonid.

Houses

Within the Network MVPs would regularly organise themselves into social groups that were called Houses and those without a House were known as **Ronin**. The ruling Omos understand the value of these MVP social organisations and have aided the creation of ten official Houses, each with their own officially recognized Omo that holds some political power. There are also other non-official Houses, and some Houses have started to accept talented non-Palantor and non-MVPs into their membership.

Bear (Strength)

A populous House that is led by the indomitable Omo **Arisu_092**, and are known for their physical strength and propensity to cause collateral damage. Members of this House tend to have large robotic bodies with thick armour and uniquely designed power cores that are plugged directly into their weapons.

Butterfly (Social)

A glamorous House that places a high value on their physical appearance and are known for their many social connections. They are masters of holographic and mental augmentation technology, and their Omo **Ena_860** has close ties to the Octanto company and many Twi-Far.

Crane (Spacecraft)

A House that is famous for their skilled pilots, sharpshooters and many Puppeteers. They have an ongoing tense rivalry with the Vargartian Sunseekers of Bourse in Var, and their arrogant Omo **Michi_036** claims to be the greatest pilot in the galaxy.

Fox (Wealth)

A small House with many many merchants, Yellow Sparks and close ties to the Corp, especially Bradford Investment. They are the wealthiest of the Houses but their beautiful Omo, **Tadame_901**, is unpopular with other Omos due to her selfish nature.

Lion (Honour)

A prideful House that has a strict code of conduct and is known for their duelling abilities and powerful Omo, **Sakamoto_002**. The Lion house is popular in Haven as they regularly hunt down pirates and defend small colonies, though some say their rules are overbearing and unhealthily harsh.

Monkey (Jokers)

A surprisingly successful House that is known for their sense of humour and love of joy. They are rivals with the dangerous Galactic Jester pirates who have targeted their Omo **Nagisa_091** and her many friends with multiple brutal attacks.

Rat (Scrappers)

A House that is home to many Green Sparks, and have close ties to the Kaltorans. They are known for their dirty fighting and suicidal tactics. Their robot bodies are commonly of low quality but are easily replaced. Their Omo **Kazuhiko_103** welcomes all of the 'unloved and homeless' to his House, but many are suspicious of his intentions as more than a few Rat house members have been charged with piracy and theft.

Snake (Secretive)

A particularly infamous House that is known for their cunning, subterfuge, secret codes, and use of stealth technology. They will do whatever it takes to win, and their Omo **Hiroshi_000** encourages glory and victory over all else. None are surprised at their rivalry with the Lion house (who they consider to be foolish), but they also dislike the Toad house as their Omo has prophesized that Hiroshi_000 would be accidentally killed by a Tolatl.

Squirrel (Vengeance)

This House was originally focused on gaining technology through exploration and salvage, especially from Mechonids. But disaster struck when they lost their mighty Omo, **Makoto_908**, to a Mechonid infection. They are now known as a House of vengeance and for killing Mechonids. They are also currently without an Omo, but are being led by Makoto_908's perpetually angry brother **Yuudai_908**.

Toad (Wisdom)

A small but respected House that contains a large number of Blue Sparks and are known for their hacking skills, wisdom and the prophetic abilities of their psionic Omo **Vaachasya_080**. They are also responsible for recovering the minds of most Pink Sparks who were once Mechonids. The Toad house rarely fights, but when they do the other houses are quick to follow them.

Technology

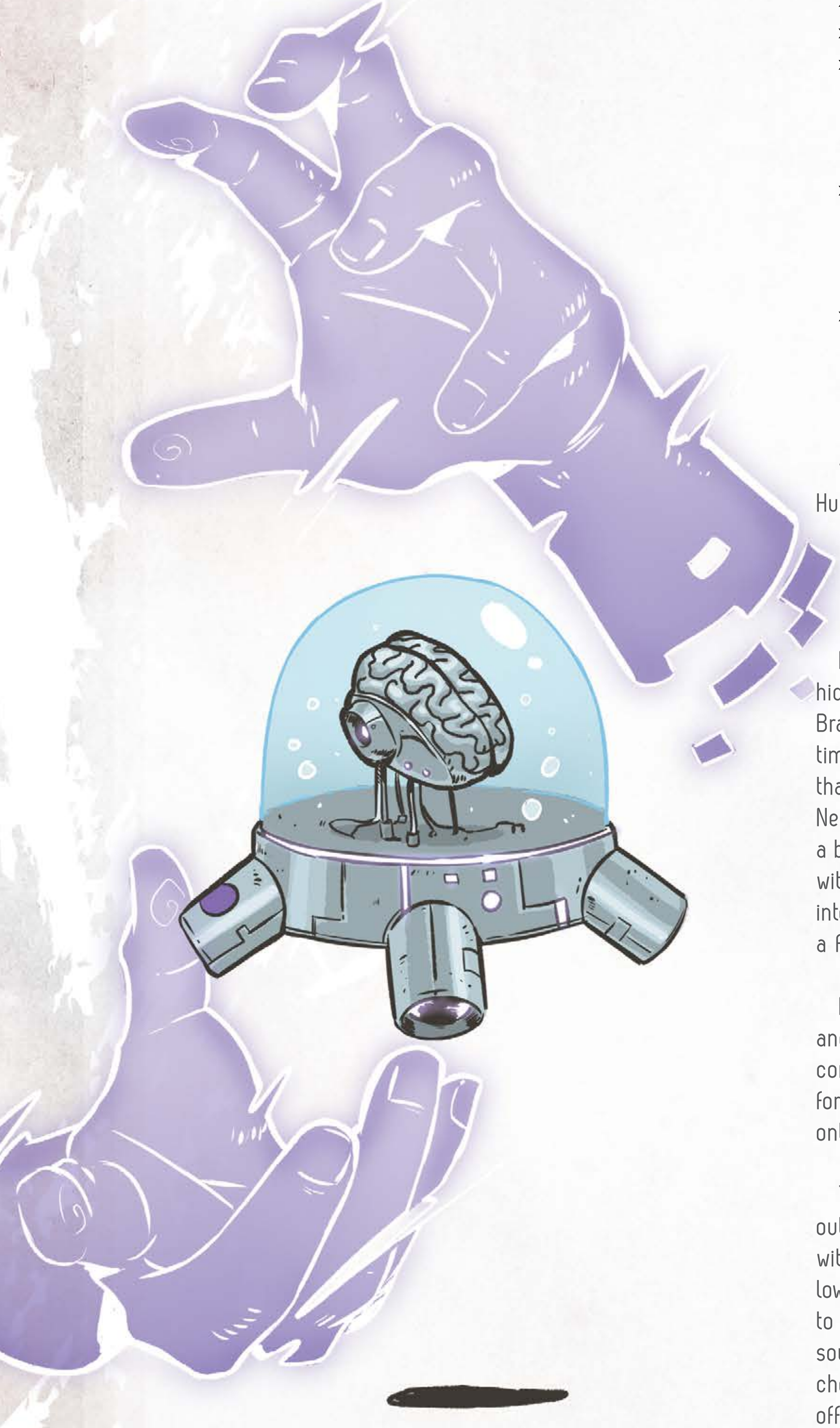
MVPs rarely work in scientific fields and prefer to loot and buy their gear. Apart from House Rat they tend to value high-quality equipment and will often prioritise a single powerful weapon that they have spent large amounts of effort on improving with custom modifications. Heavy Legion weapons are the most popular due to their offensive power and accessibility, yet almost no MVP would turn down an exotic Human-era, Archon or one-of-a-kind experimental weapon.

More than a few MVPs have gotten into trouble for prioritising 'loot' over the lives of people, which has given them a negative reputation as greedy and selfish among many Kaltorans, Legion, Remnant and even other Palantor. Gear is a status symbol for MVPs, and a much-loved topic of conversation.

Puppeteers

- **Common Motivations:**
  - Survival, intellectual power, technological power.
- **Common Characteristics:** Abrasive, intelligent, pragmatic.
- **Common Names:** Same as Sparks, see pg: 134.
- **Population:**
  - 6.96% of Palantor (Hollows).
  - 2.12% of Palantor (Puppeteers).

- **Common Traits:**
  - Sentient Ship (Influence), Lackeys (Wealth), Multi-Bodied (Psychology), Pragmatic (Psychology), Robotics (Mechanics), Swarm (Tactical), Sacrifice/Support Fire (Tactical).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Micro Rockets Gun, TAG Flare/Micro Bots Shell, Tactical Computer Arcane, Companion, Metal Body Assault Suit, Mechanics/Electronics/Computers Toolbox, Wall Shields.



"We are no more Human than you. Just as your base genetics were Human, so were our minds. But like you, we have changed so much that we must be thought of as a new species."

– Emi_903,
3050 year old Palantor.

Millions of Palantor remain trapped within their Network, desperately hiding from the Mechonids while they wait for an expensive Positronic Brain and robotic body to be built for them to be extracted into. At times the Palantor will choose to produce more Positronic Brains than robotic bodies so that that they may save more minds from the Network. Those Palantor that are placed within these Brains without a body are known as **Hollows** and will usually wait on Setzer's Comet with only the limited use of a remote-controlled holographic form to interact with the world. This is not a life that Palantor enjoy, but it is a forced reality for many.

Palantor minds are unable to be easily stored or put on pause, and without a body and the ability to perceive and interact with a complex world they will spiral towards tortured madness. To be forgotten and abandoned in this way is a horrible fate that is second only to becoming a Mechonid.

Those who are overly eager to experience their new physical reality outside the Network and Setzer's Comet may choose to be placed within a spacecraft or central server to remotely control multiple low-quality service robots and/or holograms. Palantor that adapt to this unusual existence are known as **Puppeteers** and are highly sought after as technical assistants. Puppeteers who voluntarily choose to forgo the use of a valuable robotic body when one is offered to them are greatly respected among the Palantor.

Setzer's Comet is becoming increasingly filled with bored and troublesome Hollows who while away their days in idle conversation with each other, participate in gambling to gain access to the facilities limited number of holographic bodies, and play pranks on visitors and resident Zhou. Nearly all recently rescued Palantor spend at least a year as a Hollow before they are placed within a body. It is suspected by some that the ruling Omos are doing this to not only save resources but to also maximize the number of Puppeteers within the Palantor and to weed out defective minds that did not cross over from the Network in full health.

Mind Editors

Palantor minds are designed to grow through experiences much like a traditional organic mind. But this does not stop many skilled and foolish Palantor from editing their own code. Bored Hollows are particularly known for this questionable practice, along with recently emerged minds who have been trimmed down after leaving the Network for the first time.

Palantor can encode new simple skills into themselves, cut out unpleasant memories and even tweak their personalities to have more popular traits. This procedure is invasive and incredibly dangerous if not performed by a skilled technician. Editing any mind – organic or digital – always has unexpected ripple effects, and it was this very practice that created the Mechonids.

The Palantor have recently found a curious source of skilled **Mind Editors** in the Eden Brood Nephilim, who are well-practiced in creating organic FLESH drones and fully-formed adult Emissaries with crafted personalities. The Nephilim struggle with Palantor encoding, but they have a greater understanding of the nuances of a living mind and how people are far more than just complex pattern recognizers.

Both the Palantor and the Eden Brood Nephilim are enjoying the fruits of their shared research. FLESH drones and Emissaries are becoming increasingly more complex and balanced with each new iteration, and newly emerged Palantor have been able to maintain more of their minds. The Corp look on at this venture with much envy, and regularly bribe Palantor and Nephilim scientist for data. The Kaltorans are also cautious, as they suspect the Nephilim are making use of scientific discoveries that they learned from their ancestors and by experimenting on prisoners during the Great War.

Necrovorg

A particularly dangerous category of Puppeteer is the **Necrovorg**, an immoral creature that consumes the hardware of other Palantor to expand their own capabilities. These criminals will also regularly attempt to copy the skills and memories of their victims, turning themselves into a twisted amalgamation of multiple Palantor minds. They are particularly fond of eating Hollows as they consider them to be easy prey, but all long to feast on a Blue Spark or Omo.

> "What is reality but a mind interpreting its senses?
> What is a mind but signals claiming to be reality?"
> – Umeko_0889,
> MVP, House Fox.

Palantor Spacecraft

Palantor ships are technological marvels that have been built within their dry dock factories on Setzer's Comet. All of them sport a dark-energy reactor, Palantor Mind Server, smart thrusters and a range of Human-era technologies that have been lost to the other species. Palantor spacecraft require almost no fuel, slip into Ley Space more easily and may make multiple accurate long-range attacks. Some Palantor vessels are even equipped with cloaking devices that are modelled after those protecting their Network Nodes. They are by far the most flexible spacecraft in the known galaxy.

All of these features make them a force to be reckoned with, but they come with the downside of requiring a large skilled crew and regular technical maintenance to work at full efficiency. They are also more fragile than other spacecraft and are devoid of life-support systems for organics. The **Shogun** research vessel that orbits Midas in the Var star system is one of a few Palantor vessels that has installed life support systems for guests, though only in limited sections.

The Palantor jealously guard all of their spacecraft, carefully tracking who is operating them and will send out **Kami Warden** search crews to confirm reports of their destruction. The Corporation is desperate to acquire Palantor technology and both ARK Foundings and TrueSky Holdings have clashed with Palantor MVPs and Bradford Investment strike teams after it was revealed that they had secretly stolen a Palantor spacecraft to be reverse-engineered.

Technology

Every advanced laboratory is eager to have a resident Puppeteer who can manage the equipment of their facility, especially if they have scientific, mechanical and mathematical skills.

Jump Gates

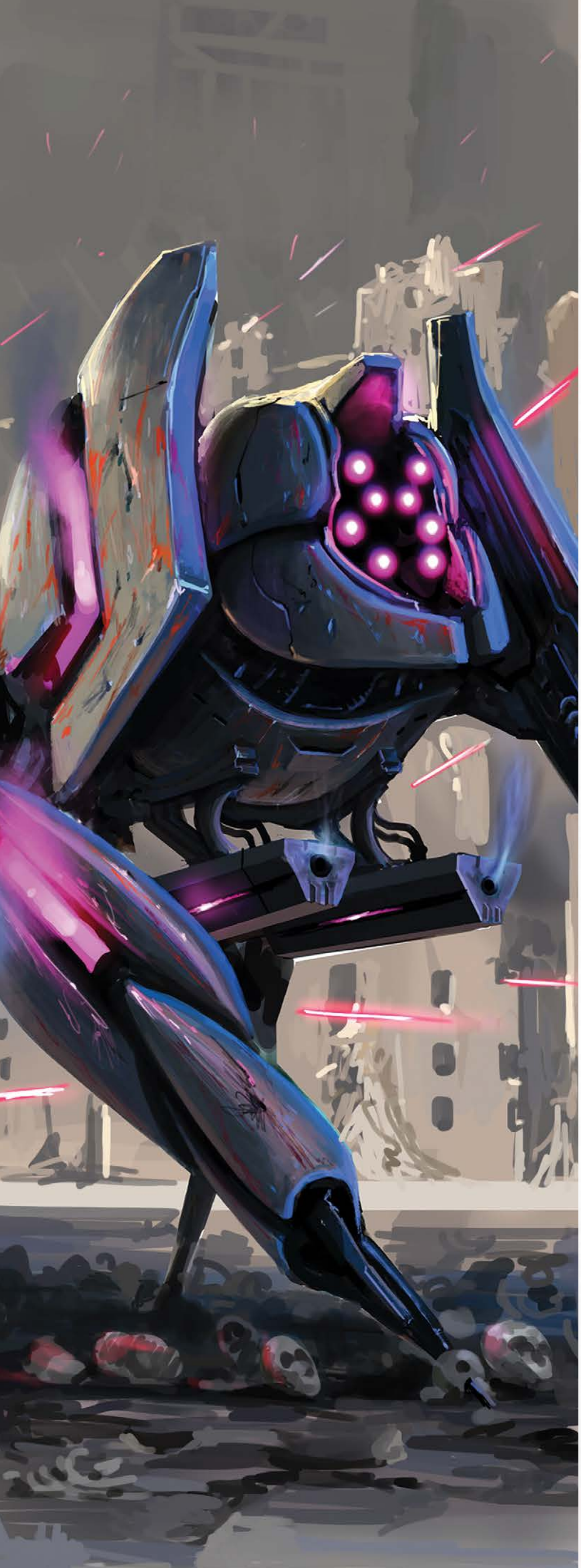
» See full Ley Lines & Ley Dust write-up from pg: 58.

The Palantor are able to move and repair Jump Gates – as they did with the Haven-Var Gate for the Corp – but may only place them in specific locations. Some suspect these locals are micro Ley Lines that have not yet fractured through to our reality. While the Palantor are the best at pin-pointing these, the other species can simply identify where an ancient pre-war Gate was built.

The Kaltorans are slowly regaining their skills in this area with the construction of their Batah Jump Gate that is in orbit around Mishpacha, and the Eden Brood Nephilim are able to link up their organic Gates as with the Haven-Kasuf creatures.

Ley Shredder (Weapon)

These are some of the Palantor's most effective weapons. They twist Ley Dust into spiral beams that briefly displace matter out of time for just long enough to allow the orbit of the galaxy to remove them far from their original location.



Mechonids (NPC)

- **Common Motivations:** Kill sentient organic life, enslave Palantor.
- **Creator:** Archons (Halo faction).
- **Population:** Unknown.
- **Known Principle Settlements:**
  - Halo Nebula, Mishpacha (Haven system), Paradise Quattuoria station (presumed to be in the Titan Expanse), Second moon of Ta'lab (Kasuf system), YUi0-38kP system.
- **Government:** Unknown.

- **Common Rivals:** Palantor.

"Words cannot fully describe the agony felt by immortal minds that are ham-fistedly ripped from the Palantor Network to be twisted and rewritten into a murderous Mechonid. They suffer as no mortal can. Endlessly screaming in silent dispair as their bodies lurch forward to kill and maim with powerful technologies not seen in the galaxy since the times of humanity."

– Cho_903,
MVP Mechonid Hunter, House Squirrel.

On the verge of extinction, the Archons became increasingly desperate, and in that desperation they turned to technology they did not, could not, understand. The ancient Humans had made great strides in electronics and robotics. One of their many achievements was the creation of autonomous robots that were able to make intelligent decisions and respond to external stimuli and hard-wired commands. When Humanity died out, their robot creations were left dormant for thousands of years.

Until the war, the Archons had only lightly dabbled in robotics, preferring instead to work with the biological. But when their backs were to the wall they turned to extremists from the Halo faction to create a new mechanical army to replace the faultering Legion. They weaponised ancient robots, powering them with radioactive micro-fusion cores and fitted them with their most advanced bio-disintegration weaponry.

To drive these robots, the Archons discovered what they thought was AI software in a vast hidden server. They thought they were simply reprogramming them to be soldiers, but in truth they were ham-fistedly reaching into the Palantor Network, ripping out sentient minds and twisting them into sociopathic killers. The final result was the Mechonids, autonomous killing machines that were programmed to eliminate all traces of the X'ion and its forces.

It wasn't long before the Archons realised that their mastery of biological technology had not equipped them to control such ancient and advanced electronic entities. The Mechonids side-stepped their mission parameters and took to extreme and vicious tactics, such as fighting with disabled radioactive-core shields, infecting their enemies and environments with poisonous gas. Then, for unknown reasons, they turned on their Archon masters and began to target all sentient biological life without discrimination.

Dormancy

After the Archons had all been killed, the Mechonids fought with the remaining Nephilim for many years until their foes regressed into a feral, non-sentient state. Once there were no sentient biological targets left to kill, the Mechonids went dormant. Soldiers slumped over, production facilities shut down and their ships turned off their engines.

There seemed to be no grand plan to Mechonid dormancy: most simply deactivated where they stood, and over the following century, they would slowly be reclaimed by nature. This has led to the unnerving prospect of stumbling across dormant Mechonids almost anywhere, with the only warning for travellers and explorers being a glint of metal through a thick mount of moss or a pile of gnarled tree roots. However, precious few have been decommissioned entirely, with most metal soldiers still able to activate upon sensing sentient life, their mission parameters still very much intact.

It wasn't until the Corporation arrived in the Haven system, filling the voids of space with traffic and communication signals, that the Mechonids stirred once more on mass: first as digital hunters in the Palantor Network, then on the jungle world of Mishpacha, followed by their factories around Ta'lab in the Kasuf system. Some suspect that the Mechonids were never truly asleep, just resting their bodies for a century while their leaders worked tirelessly to create an ultimate plan to eradicate all sentient organic life.

Dirty Combat Tactics

The Nephilim waged a war of genocide, not conquest. To the civilised Archons their combat methods were savage, unthinkable and devoid of empathy. But they were still an organic people, limited by the needs of their flesh and lacking in psychological insight.

The Mechonids seemed to be the perfect response: an unrelenting mechanical army that would not only do things that even the Nephilim dared not, but they were also equipped with cunning minds that could manipulate every mental, cultural and biological vulnerability in their foes.

Hacking

Mechonids are incredibly adept at annihilating digital defences and taking control of enemy technology. Even lowly warrior Disciples possess the equipment and expertise needed to surprise foes who assume them to be simplistic (and insane) soldiers who are only there to fire a gun.

Entire spacecraft can fall under Mechonid control within minutes of a sustained attack once they can form a solid digital connection. Life support systems will be shut down, artificial gravity manipulated, airlocks opened, sewage systems reversed, fuel pumped into space, reactors overloaded and even intercom systems bombarded with screeching sirens of noise. Any crewmembers not suffocated, hurled into space, crushed or flash-fried by power leaks will be left weakened and terrified for the boarding action that is sure to follow.

Radiation & Detonation

Even on the verge of destruction, they will continue to carry out their mission by detonating their radioactive micro-fusion cores. Average-sized Mechonids are able to explode with the force of a grenade, while larger variants have been known to clear a sports oval worth of trees. Downed massive resource-harvesting Reapers can even tear open small pockets of unstable space-time as their Ley Dust teleportation technology is destabilised.

These self-detonation practices also serve to deny their enemies access to their technology. Even when their power cores are unable to fully detonate their weapons and bodies will be purged with overloaded power surges, their systems littered with infectious code and their minds uploaded via Jump Space to a nearby facility.

Sensor & Communication Trickery

Outside of killing techniques, Mechonids are capable of more insidious and subversive tactics. They will often create fake sensor pings or hide their signatures from other craft while on the hunt. Ships have found themselves drawn into fake SOS beacons, complete with entire fabricated conversations made with the help of recycled wartime audio logs from the Great War.

Despite their mental instability, Mechonids are quite capable of mimicking emotional responses and even tailoring their traps for different prey. For example: Corporate merchant vessels may find themselves tempted by what their scans show as a treasure trove of valuable resources, while Remnant travellers may find themselves drawn into an ambush by fabricated rumours of a holy relic or refugees in need. Eden Brood Nephilim have even begun to discover subtle fake rumors on news networks about rare feral Nephilim that they were specifically trying to find.

Intelligent Disinformation

Perhaps more insidious is the growing theory that Mechonids themselves have helped to distort their image in the public sphere, encouraging the spread of any reports that paint them as mindless soldiers. News of their ingenuity is mysteriously downplayed, while final recordings of ruined vessels almost never seem to tell a full story. Despite many attacks on the population of Haven and distant colonists, accurate recordings of their nature and tactics remain scarce, with more fanciful stories often dismissed as the mad ravings of the traumatised. In this way, Mechonids remain spectral figures shrouded in mystery, hiding their true capabilities behind a smokescreen of their own invention.

This web of misinformation is impossible to trace, and may simply be the result of greedy Corp CEOs and intrepid leaders urging their people onwards to greater expansion. Fear of Mechonids runs deep amongst the people of Haven, especially amongst the Kaltorans and Palantor, as they are the only ones with clear memories and knowledge of their true horror.

Size & Designations

The Archons formed the Mechonids into six different categories, with multiple variations within each – all differing in armament, size, intellect and function.

Acolytes (Utility)

These small Mechonids make use of a relatively simple non-Palantor AI and are primarily designed to act as tactical support units, scouts and infiltrators. Though swarm variants are occasionally used to overwhelm and distract foes, employing shock weapons at short range. Acolytes are the smallest category of Mechonid, usually the size of a person's head but specialized units have also been known to be much smaller.

Destroying them may be a simple matter for a hardened soldier, but their presence is often a harbinger of deadlier foes. They're commonly equipped with technical tools, signal jammers, scanners and/or shield projectors.

Disciple (Warrior)

The typical foot soldiers, Disciples are roughly crafted in a humanoid shape, albeit one made from unnervingly sharp angles and with digitigrade legs. They are infamous for their clouds of radiation, dirty combat tactics and bio-disintegration weaponry. They're objects of great unease for the Palantor as they house the most broken minds: forever screaming and wailing in silent pain, forever suffering and unable to truly die.

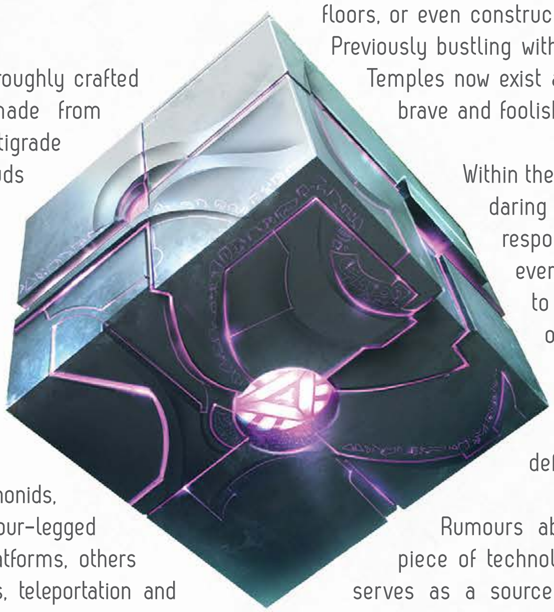
Prophet (Leader)

Heavy hitters and leaders of the Mechonids, Prophets come in a wide range of four-legged models. While some are simple gun platforms, others make use of advanced shield projectors, teleportation and other exotic Ley Dust technologies. Their minds tend to be less broken than those of Disciples, allowing Prophets to issue complex commands. This also makes them high-priority targets for reclamation by the Palantor, as it is possible to heal their minds.

Reaper (Resource Collector)

These are the largest and most powerful of the Mechonid ground units, but they were not designed for front-line combat. Their primary purpose is to harvest metal by teleporting ruins and salvage away to Mechonid factories. While they can defend themselves with frightening power, they will often ignore enemies if there are nearby resources to be harvested. They are also thought to be driven by complex AI, making them some of the few machines used by Mechonids that don't rely on harvested Palantor minds to function.

Reapers are towering robotic constructs with simple shape central bodies – such as cubes and spheres – that are surrounded by a mass of multi-purposed tentacle appendages.



Harbinger (Spacecraft)

These are the Mechonid's robotic spacecraft with no internal rooms or corridors, and are serviced by swarms of specialized Acolytes. Small fighters tend to have Disciple minds, while larger vessels are guided by one-or-more Prophet minds that can direct and teleport ground forces.

In the rare instances when a Harbinger mind is reclaimed, they will often reject a 'normal' Palantor body, preferring instead to exist within the quiet networks of distant space stations and lonely satellites.

Temple (Facility)

These secret factories were able to produce a steady stream of Mechonid bodies during the Great War, but now they mostly lie dormant as they await instructions and materials. Temples are vast structures, well hidden and built-in difficult-to-reach locations: buried within hollowed-out mountains, resting on ocean floors, or even constructed to harness the power of volcanoes. Previously bustling with activity and fiercely guarded, inactive Temples now exist as treasure troves of technology to the brave and foolish.

Within the echoing, labyrinthine halls of a Temple, daring explorers will find the machines responsible for crafting Mechonid technology: everything from bio-disintegrator guns to massive shipyards for the creation of new Harbingers. The few who make it past the initial guards will find the Temple itself waking as they progress, confronted by increasingly stronger defence systems.

Rumours abound of the **Nucleus Cube**, a single piece of technology at the heart of each Temple. This serves as a source of near-inexhaustible energy, but is also a gigantic signal beacon able to summon the minds of defeated Mechonids back to the Temple's central mainframe, ready to be given new bodies. If the Nucleus exists, none have ever been recovered, as the Temple's core is always guarded by experimental soldiers whose mysterious capabilities exceed any other Mechonid variant.

Deus (Mind Harvester)

By far the rarest variant, with only twelve ever made. Deus are gargantuan spacefaring Mechonids, comprising a forest of silver tendrils surrounding a radiant golden core, or 'throne'. The throne itself is an impossibly advanced bio-organic supercomputer, that is thoughht to be able to network across interstellar distances.

The primary function of the Deus variant is to roam the galaxy, seeking out distant and hidden Palantor Network Nodes so that new minds may be torn out to become new Mechonids. These hidden nodes are hidden and defended by ancient human systems, and would be too powerful for any other Mechonid to handle.

However, there are legends from reclaimed Mechonids of a far higher purpose: the hunt for the mythical **Speaker**. Mechonids posit that the 'Speaker' is a supercomputer of unfathomable power from Humanities Golden Age that coordinates all jump technology across the galaxy. If a Deus ever manages to locate the Speaker, this conflict could decide the fate of all sentient life, and it is possible that the X'ion itself it seeking to find it before they do.

The unusual genius of the Deus comes from their macabre creation. A sect of misguided Archons from the Halo faction sought to use newly discovered Human technology to digitize their minds so that they may escape death. But even at this point they failed to understand that the Palantor were Human minds and that their Network was built to house them. They also failed to realize that the process of digitizing their minds would not shift their consciousness, but just create a digital copy of themselves.

The thrones at the heart of each Deus are the vast servers holding the sinister minds of these Archons: forever waring against themselves and corrupting their natures through self-editing. They are no longer Archons, but something new.

Technology

While the bodies of the Mechonids are often rotted by radiation exposure or covered in mud and vines, their minds have grown in their cunning, ruthlessness and technological power. Early Mechonids functioned much like the Legion, but with each passing year of the war their scientific knowledge grew and their methods became increasingly divergent.

Modern Mechonids are often frailer than their ancient counterparts due to decay, but are increasingly making use of exotic technologies that have not been seen since before Humanity's Age of Gnawing.

Bio-Disintegrator (Weapon)

The Mechonids most infamous weapon is a crowning achievement of blended Archon-Human technology. On a surface level these guns fire a pink radioactive beam that can strip a target of all biological matter by destabilising organic attoms. But extensive studies have failed to fully understand how they do this and why they only affect organics. Some non-Mechonids have learned to use salvaged weapons, but even these require heavy modifications and in-depth technical skills to keep them operational.

Teleportation & Reaper Beam (Weapons)

While Human-made personal Jump Gates are rare, they are not unknown and have always been static and required a stable power source. The Mechonids are continually pushing the limits of what was thought possible through Ley technology, especially in the area of personal Jumping.

Mechonids can create temporary local Jump Portals to instantly transport their troops over relatively short distances and have weaponized this same technology to create beams that can teleport away targeted matter. But in both of these methods they are limited to only transporting inorganic material. It is not known if this is a scientific limitation of the technology or a designed feature. The Palantor have salvaged some of this technology, but have not had the resources to conduct a full study.

Shields

As befitting machines designed for war, Mechonid shields are incredibly advanced and resistant to most weapons. Their energy reserves allow them to stretch the limits of personal shielding, with single Disciples known to withstand concentrated fire from entire Legion squads for several minutes without suffering serious damage.

Pinpoint control is the key to Mechonid shield efficiency, with all units able to re-route their power systems in nanoseconds to account for drains and sustained fire. Instead of single all-encompassing barriers used by most modern shields, Mechonids instead generate small, powerful shields around the points of impact, relying on automated projectile path-mapping systems to predict where to defend from incoming attacks. This optimises their power usage, allowing them to quickly compensate for powerful blows. Although EMPs and Disruptors have had some success in briefly nullifying them.

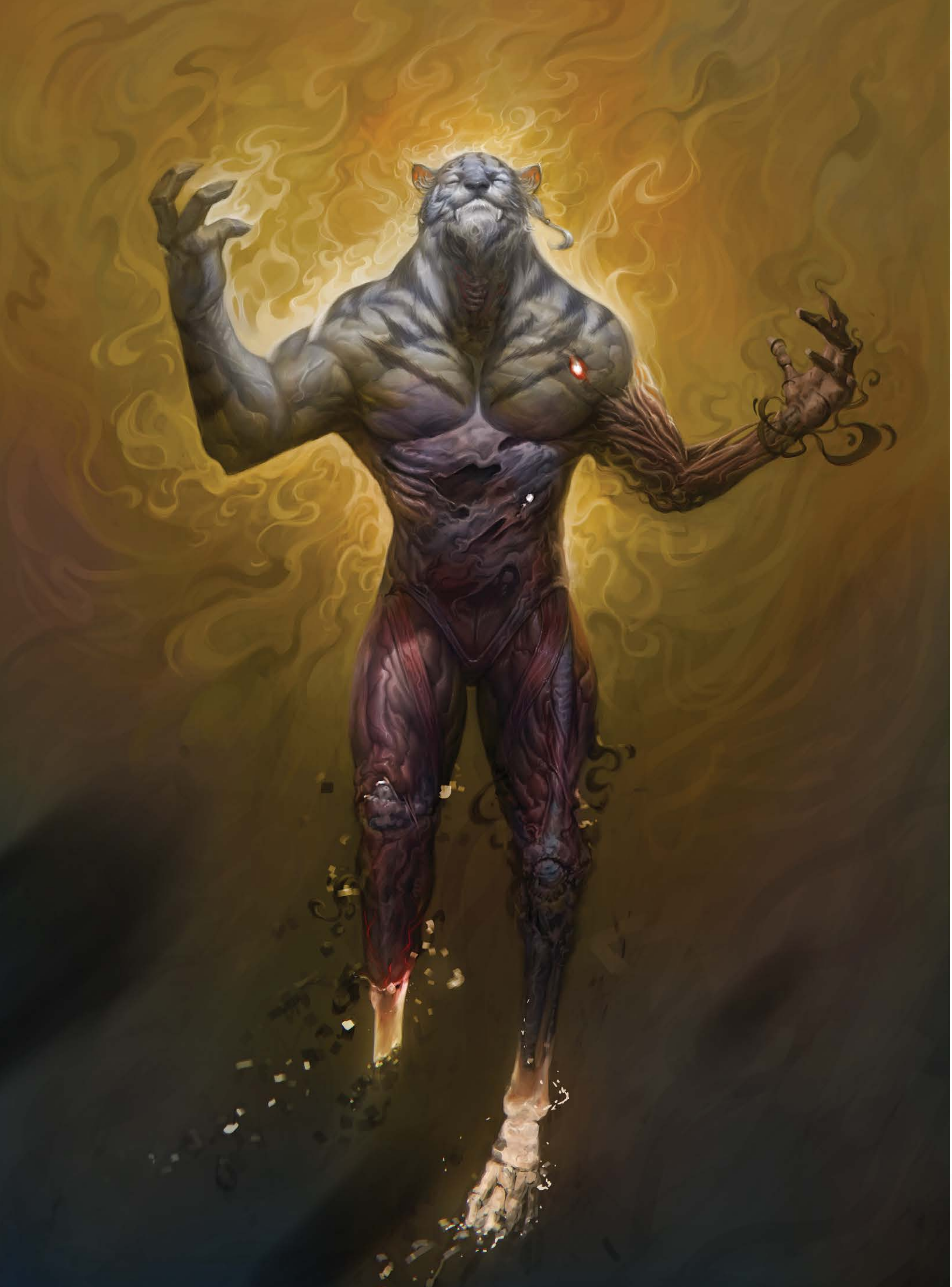
A more reliable method of countering these defences is scattered fire from multiple directions. This will overload the shield's reactive capabilities and force the Mechonid to divert power from its own cognitive functions (if no Prophet is nearby to assist) to keep itself alive. These sluggish Mechonids should be quickly killed as they will recover their full mental abilities as soon as their shields collapse.

Mental Uploads & Reconstruction

Mechonids are masters of all things relating to artificial minds, including the creation of more advanced (but possibly corrupting) positronic brains (see pg: 137). Wirelessly transferring an entire consciousness is an art that the Mechonids have perfected even beyond the limits of what the Palantor thought possible.

Much like the Palantor, it is incredibly rare for a Mechonid mind to be truly destroyed. But unlike the Palantor the Mechonids are less worried about the purity of their minds, and their Temples will rebuild a degraded digital entity that has existed within Jump Space for some time without a physical vessel.

Even for insane Disciples, this allows them to retain tactical knowledge from past defeats, returning with greater cunning and insight than before. More importantly, it makes reducing Mechonid numbers a nearly impossible task, as a single Harbinger can scoop up hundreds of disembodied soldiers at a time to be delivered to a Temple.



Remnant (Ursai)

- **Creator:** Archons (Unending faction) and All-Being.
- **Average Height:** 1.9m
- **Average Life Span:** 102 (145 natural) years.
- **Population:** 14 million (Haven), 79 million (Kumba).
- **Principle Settlements:**
  - Mishpacha (Haven), Kumba Prime (Kumba).
- **Government:** Theocratic federation of states.
- **Primary Exports:** Enforcement, medical aid (Kaltoran).
- **Primary Imports:** Land (Kaltoran and Nephilim), food (Kaltoran).

- **Common Allies:** Kaltoran, Nephilim, Zhou.
- **Common Rivals:** Corporation, Echoes, Legion.

"The All-Being chooses the weak and broken to be his instruments so that all may know it is he who has power and not us."
– Book of Wandering, Chapter 62 v6

The Ursai were a diverse mammalian species that were created by the Archons during the first millennia of their empire. They were a greatly favoured people due to the quality of their genetic construction, which made them generally stronger and smarter than the others. But apart from the thermal regulating hair that covered their entire bodies, they had no particularly unique natural gifts. Over time the Ursai's favour declined with the Archons as they granted more of their attention to their newer children and the exotic abilities that they had given them. The Archons even sliced off star systems from the Ursai nation to give to the other species, such as Respite that was transferred over to the Kaltorans.

As one of the oldest nations within the Archon empire the Ursai took it upon themselves to share their wisdom with these new species. But as is the proclivity of youth – even with nations – this guidance was scorned.

After the X'ion rebellion and the beginning of the Fractured Age the Ursai found themselves cut off from the other nations. Their Archon masters from the Unending faction became paranoid of other Archons and spent much of their time spying on them and hoarding vast resources in their Arcadia Quattuoria space station.

The Ursai suffered during this Age but also built themselves up to be self-actualized and increasingly self-governed under their negligent and absent Archon masters. When X'ions agents made contact with them decades before the Great War they found the Ursai nation already primed for rebellion. The X'ion coerced the Ursai into betraying the Archons by funnelling in Nephilim operatives, sabotaging defence systems, stealing resources, and building a secret army of powerful warships and elite soldiers.

When the X'ion and its Nephilim army attacked it all went to plan. The Ursai killed their Archon masters, took control of their precious Arcadia station, jumped in Nephilim forces and they launched effective attacks against their neighbours (including the Kaltorans). Yet, the Ursai traitors were to be betrayed in turn.

A large Nephilim brood that had fought alongside the Ursai to destroy two of their neighbours turned on them, bombarding their worlds with a devastating Synaptagen virus that had been specifically engineered to kill Ursai. In desperation they turned to an ancient Human weapon known as the Deatomiser. But the weapon was beyond their understanding and killed not only the Nephilim attackers but also the Ursai themselves, leaving behind seas of tortured psychic ghosts that would come to be known as Echoes.

With a single flash of vast power all Ursai in their capital Kumba system had been killed, and their species had been reduced to yet another extinction footnote in a vast and complex war.

But in defiance of this ignominious end, some fifty years after the Great War an entity of immense power – the All-Being – arrived on Kumba Prime and resurrected millions of Ursai from the dead. Those raised were renamed to the Remnant, and with their new name came a new identity and purpose, one of spirituality and faith.

A teacher that was seen as the embodiment of the All-Being lived with the Remnant for many years, teaching and protecting them from the Echoes. After a time this teacher left their world, leaving behind only their god's invisible presence.

Over the coming years Remnant society would fracture over disagreements about the nature of the All-Being and why he had raised them from the dead. Most see him as the only true god, creator of all. Many see it as a psionic manifestation from billions of minds merging into a single entity. While others dare to see it as the X'ion itself, returned to reward them for their loyalty and to right the mistake of the traitorous Nephilim who had attacked them.

◆ ◆ ◆

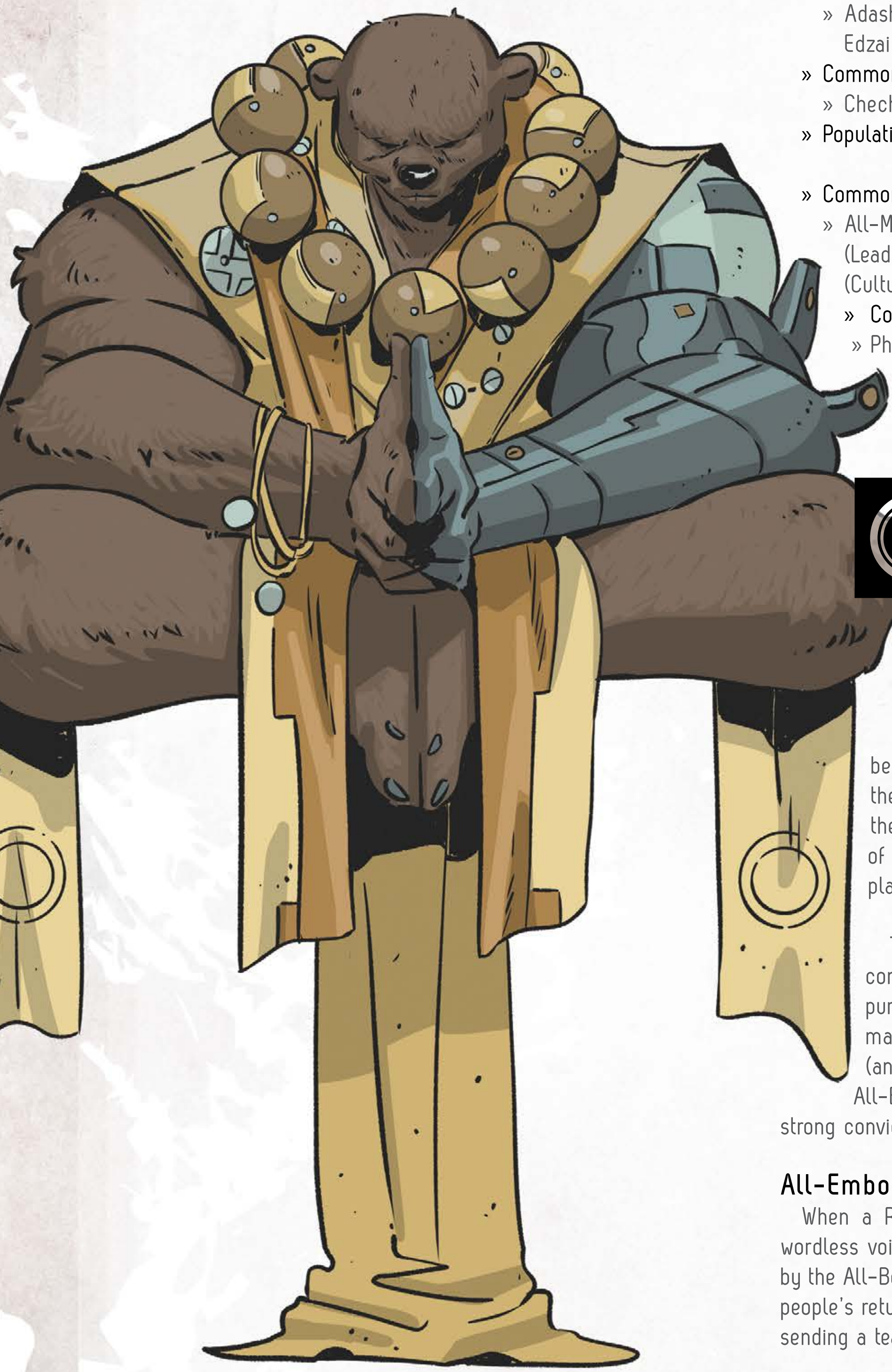
The All-Being's protective presence is felt strongest at the Simba Mabwes, the holy sites and relics that dot the desert surface of Kumba Prime. Many pilgrims have gathered at these sites in hope of miracles, forming around these protective locals into massive cities called Gutas. In recent years, the All-Being has started to withdraw his presence from these holy sites and allow the Echoes to encroach. His withdrawal has forced many Remnant to leave their homes for the newly rediscovered Haven system, questioning why the All-Being would do such a thing. Have they angered their god, or are they simply being encouraged to move on?

Many Remnant refugees have found a home on the jungle planet Mishpacha, and have received a mixed reception. They are a numerous people that bring few resources but have the cultural strength to maintain their identity, the ability to work in any field, unique All-Monk healers and powerful psions. With each year they grow in number and strength, and their potential to disrupt the established cultural order within Haven grows. It will only be a few years before they are a substantial political, economic and military power within the system and switch from beggars to providers.

All-Faith

- **Common Motivations:** Obedience to the All-Being.
- **Common Characteristics:**
  - Contemplative, dedicated, traditional, zealous.
- **Common Names:**
  - Adashe (m), Anatsa (f), Banga (m), Chenai (f), Chigiya (m), Edzai (f), Ega (m), Gugu (m), Haatsari (f), Idanayl (f).
- **Common Family Names:**
  - Chechipiri, Chengetedzwa, Itsva, Jesu, Krisitu, Ruponeso.
- **Population:** 69.01% of Remnant.

- **Common Traits:**
  - All-Monk (Resources), Meditation (Grit), Preacher (Leadership), Philosopher (Psychology), Structured Life (Culture), Paramedic (Medicine), Defensive Strike (Tactical).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Phase Beam/Plasma Gun, Arcane, Arc-Fire Melee, Skill Durable Clothing, Energised Plates Assault Suit, Protective Stance, Psychology/Physical/Resolve/Medicine Toolbox.



> "We belong to the All-Being. He selected us – dead traitors – because we were the most unworthy of people so that all intimations of glory are taken from us and given to him."
>
> – Chatunga Itsva,
> All-Monk.

The Remnant's understanding of the All-Being has been largely shaped by a teacher that was known as the **All-Embodiment**. While there are numerous divergent theological opinions and traditions within the Remnant, all of those that see the All-Being as a monotheistic god are placed under the title of All-Faith.

The All-Faith encourages their adherents to lives in contentment under the provision of the All-Being and to pursue truth, love and a putting off of self-interest. While many younger Remnant have a casual faith, older Remnant (and especially those that were directly raised by the All-Being) and non-Remnant converts tend to have very strong convictions.

All-Embodiment, Simba Mabwes & the All-Tomes

When a Remnant is raised from the dead they always feel a wordless voice in their mind that lets them know they are cared for by the All-Being. For a rare few during the first years of the Remnant people's return to life they also sensed that the All-Being would be sending a teacher to guide them in his ways, the All-Embodiment.

The All-Embodiment spent his entire resurrected life wandering the deserts of Kumba Prime, gathering thousands of disciples to be trained in the power of the All-Being, teaching theology to the newly resurrected and renamed Remnant people, and guarding all against the spectral Echoes. Nothing is known about his former life as an Ursai during and before the Great War, or why he was selected by the All-Being. At the end of his nine-year ministry he walked alone into the desert after having been rejected by the locals of a tiny village and was never seen again. This was almost fifty years ago, and some say that he may yet return.

During his time on Kumba Prime the All-Embodiment blessed mundane objects and locations – which would come to be known as **Simba Mabwes –** with the power to ward off Echoes and to amplify the All-Being's power. Cities – known as Gutas – were built up around these relics.

The **All-Tomes** are holy books written by the All-Embodiment's disciples during and after his ministry, and form the philosophical cornerstones of the All-Faith religion and culture; including their understanding of justice, government, liberty and personal duty. There are six canonical All-Tomes, a further four that are highly regarded and two with disputed content.

Book of Truth & Love (One)
Also known as the Book of Rings for its repeated use of ring analogies and metaphors. This is considered to be the most important of the All-Tomes as it is the only one to be written by the All-Embodiment himself. It puts forth direct calls for all people to place their trust in the All-Being, and to live lives that circle around 'Truth and Love' and not 'Laws or Self'.

Book of Wandering (Two)
A collection of wisdoms, sayings, parables and songs that apply to both everyday life and grand ideas. This book famously ends with a lamentation by an All-Monk about the Remnant's terrible past when they were the Ursai, and how the All-Being chose the worst of people – traitors who died through hubris – to be his voice in the galaxy.

Book of the Three (Three)
A series of conversations between three All-Monks and the All-Embodiment about the will of the All-Being, prophecy and how the followers of the All-Being will suffer for their faith.

Book of Stones (Four)
Named after the first Simba Mabwe that was a simple stone that was used by the All-Embodiment to save the Guta of **Rima Peak**. This book is a large and meandering guide to civic duty, order, peace and a warning against chaos.

Book of Enlightenment (Five)
A large historical documentation of the All-Embodiment's nine-year ministry that started with his mysterious appearence near the Guta of **High Matombo**. This book is focused on his journey and how various Remnant responded to his message and his disciples. The old All-Monk **Panashe Kutenda** who wrote this book is still alive and she lives in the Guta of **Kureba Plain**.

Book of Letters (Six)
A collection of correspondence between the All-Embodiment and various struggling Gutas and All-Monks who were not travelling with him. Most of these letters are a mixture of moral and theological corrections, along with a substantial amount of encouragement to hold to their faith in the All-Being's care. This book also contains instructions on the use of All-Power.

Book of Temperance (Seven, Noncanonical)
A controversial book that encourages self-control, the blessings of poverty, and encouragement to give yourself over to works of charity and egalitarianism. The authorship of this books is in question, and there are many versions of it in circulation.

Book of Fire (Eight, Noncanonical)
A supplementary set of guides to the Book of Stones. The Book of Fire warns against civic and personal stagnation, rot, legalism and the dangers of too many rules. It is not considered canon by many All-Monks as they see it as contradictory to the Book of Stones. While others see it as a counterbalance that is designed to foster a shifting equilibrium between the cosmic tensions of 'Order and Chaos'.

Book of Thorns (Nine, Noncanonical)
Written after the All-Embodiments departure, this book was created by one of his close All-Monk disciples and has a strong focus on how all people are to place their trust in the All-Being and not his servants; including the All-Embodiment himself.

Book of Arms (Ten, Noncanonical)
A martial guide that was started by the disciples of the All-Embodiment, and has been regularly added to over the decades by both All-Monks and skilled non-All-Power warriors. It contains little theology but is considered sacred as it belongs to a long Remnant tradition of building upon and passing down martial knowledge. It is also controversially considered required reading for all members of the Body Count corporation.

Book of Death (Eleven, Controversial)
Written by a questioning All-Monk disciple of the All-Embodiment who was a scientist that was responsible for the murder of millions of Kaltorans and Legion during the Great War. He studied who was chosen by the All-Being to be resurrected and how the All-Power works from a scientific POV. The book famously ends with a bold declaration that the appearance of the All-Being is quite possibly the most significant event in all of history if he truly is a god. And not just an entity with knowledge and technology that is so advanced that even the humans would have considered it to be magic.

Book of Prosperity (Twelve, Controversial)
Seen by most as subtle lies designed by All-Truth cultists or Psion Mind heretics to undermine the All-Faith. This book encourages personal wealth so that one may do more good.

Many Factions

Within the All-Faith religion there are hundreds of divergent factions, which are known as **Nyikas**. Nearly all these groups peacefully coexist despite their theological differences, as most disparities are a matter of emphasis and culture, and not core tenants of faith. Any Nyikas who claims to have exclusive access to the truth or the All-Being are quickly denounced by the wider All-Faith community, and often lose their access to the All-Power. The All-Being appears to want there to be many different groups who worship him.

Monasteries of Hope

The monks of Hope are an old and well-respected order that was founded shortly after the departure of the All-Embodiment, and tasked themselves with keeping the records of his words and deeds. They are responsible for the formation of most All-Tomes.

They believe the Remnant were not brought back to earn redemption. They are to accept their rebirth as a gift from a loving parent. To try to earn it would be to dishonour the gift and the gift-giver. Rather, it is to be simply accepted, enjoyed, and made the most of. They must be generous and forgiving of others, as the All-Being has been so generous and forgiving of them.

Order of Redemption

This large but contentious religious order is organized in a military-like hierarchy, in which the most pious and martially capable hold power. It is the Order's belief that the All-Being ressurected the Remnant to grant them a chance at redemption. They seek this redemption by strictly adhering to rules and traditions that encourage all to seek out and destroy evil.

Members have three paths within the Order as either, monks, priests or clerics. Monks are scholars and tacticians. Priests are preachers, missionaries and healers. While clerics are direct combatants. Those yet to choose a path are known as initiates, their greatest warriors are known as Paladins, and the Orders supreme leader is the might Grand Master **Akashinga Mutsvene** who operates out of the Orders' largest base on the planetoid Rugerero in the Monopoly Belt near Mishpacha in Haven.

Seraphim Symphony

» Twi-Far converts to the All-Faith, see pg: 170.

Vasina Tariro

A tiny Nyika of space-fairing All-Monks who believe the All-Being has abandoned the Simba Mabwes and the Kumba system because the Remnant have failed to pursue him in prayer and meditation.

Initiates to their order must pass a trial in the storm of Outorwa on the planet Shumirai in the Kumba system where they operate a space station. Many Vasina Tariro partake in pilgrimages to protect refugees leaving Kumba, but they always return to support more of those who have been displaced by the Echoes.

Cultural Structure

Remnant cities are known as a **Guta**, are commonly made up of two-story multi-generational homes with flat shaded garden rooves, have a large central paved clearing for pop-up market stalls, are rimmed by guard towers and their horizons are dominated by large churches of varying ornamentation. Remnant architecture favours plain walls, but with many statues and splashes of bright colour in the form of dyed shade cloths and tile murals.

Most settlements are ruled by a single democratically elected regional party that is led by a gifted **Mutungamiri**. These political parties often have strong ties to one or more religious Nyikas.

Civil services of education, healthcare and charity are typically managed by **All-Monks**, while security is handled by heavily armed **Murwi** soldiers and warrior-monks. All people that can make use of the All-Being's All-Power are considered to be an All-Monk. These are nearly always Remnant, but questions over the automatic civic influence of this title have been raised as more non-Remnant All-Power users appear. **Gunzvenzve** are factionless travellers,

Murwi soldiers are an incredibly effective military force, as their leaders often fought in the Great War, and they have been forced to combat the horrific Echoes on a regular basis over the past six decades. While the Murwi are treated with great respect by the Remnant people, they are viewed with suspicion by the Kaltorans and Legion who wish to have many of their leaders charged for war crimes.

Bleed All-Power

The devastating Synaptagen virus that the Nephilim deployed against the Ursai can still be found in large quantities (occasionally carrying psionic nanites) and can move between worlds and star systems. All Remnant would be dead if the All-Being had not continued to sustain their bodies through its All-Power. The glowing power of the All-Being flows through the blood of all Remnant, no matter who they are or their relationship to the All-Being.

Many outcasts may hate the dogmas and myths of the All-Faith and have a low opinion of the All-Being, but many are still thankful that it continues to sustain their lives. Some believe the All-Being has chosen to not make the Remnant immune to the Synaptagen virus so that they remain dependent on it and are unable to rebel. While others say that the All-Being is simply making its care and provision for its chosen people clearly seen by all.

Language: Ursai

Pre-war Ursai was one of the oldest languages within the Archon empire and was used to form the foundation for many other languages such as Kaltoran and Corp. But as with all things Remnant, the modern Ursai language has gone through a period of reform to adapt to their new faith. The All-Embodiment taught his followers using their ancient Ursai language but with his grammatical choices and teachings rippling out to greatly shape the modern dialect. Additionally, any change in attitude comes with a change in vocabulary; there are now many words to refer to spiritual ideas where previously there were few.

Sturdy Spacecraft

In preparation for the Great War the Ursai built thick-set and incredibly tough spacecraft that made use of their advanced shield technologies to protect and reinforce their hulls. Although they have knowledge of pre-War technologies and construction methods the Remnant have not been able to build new ships en masse as most of their resources and pre-war factories on Kumba Prime are haunted by unkillable Echoes.

Technology

Most Remnant technological developments stem from salvaging and repairing pre-war equipment. The ancient Ursai were a well-developed people, but they strained under the greed of their Archon masters and were forced to develop their military in secret as they prepared for the Great War.

The ancient Ursai were particularly well-known for their energy and shield technologies, as they had some of the best in the empire during the Fractured Age. These technologies were easily adapted to war, but they also aided them with accessing resources on inhospitable planets.

All-Power (Arcane Skill)

» See Rule Book pg: 23 for a full write-up on All-Power.

This is an ethereal power, seemingly immune to all scientific study. Some see it as an alternative form of Ley usage, much like Jump travel and Psionics; most see it as a gift from the All-Being god for healing and protection.

All-Power is bound to the will of the All-Being and may only be used by those that he allows in ways that he approves. The Dawn All-Truth sect is the only non-All-Faith adherents who are known to use All-Power.

Energised Plates

Plates of metal that are wired with circuitry that allow their integrity to be reinforced with shielding. Widely used in Remnant spacecraft, armour and by the heavy assault Legion forces.

Remnant do not want to be associated with their Ursai ancestors and will add multiple layers of varying material and ornamentation to salvaged Energised Plated armour.

Plasma (Weapon)

A super-hot cloud of particles, often made from liquid metal, plasma has a limited fire rate due to the time needed to reach its weaponised temperature. Once it strikes its target the plasma burns a focused area with deadly efficacy.

Plasma weapons were common among the Ursai and elite Archon guards during the Great War, but are a rarer post-war item due to the expensive resources needed to keep them in working order. Plasma weapons are seen as a status item among the Corp and Palantor, a sign of wealth and power. They are everyday items for Remnant military forces.

"For over a thousand years these Ursai were our oppressive wardens, a fact that they claim to not even remember. They are a spoilt people who are forever gaining without earning."

– Edgar Dray,
CEO of Dray Mining Consortium.

"Yes, they were our enemies in the war, but like us, they have changed, been reborn, and are eager for a different future."

– Adam Swagger,
Kaltoran rascal explorer.

"Those with foresight can see that they are a rising star in Haven. We must position ourselves to be their allies, but we must be careful to not act preemptively and threaten our position with the Corp, and we must guard ourselves against those of their number who have bound themselves to the X'ion."

– Krizacklor,
Nephilim CEO of FLESH Inc.

"These so-called 'Remnant' are the rise of yet another X'ion loyalist threat in the region. Give it time and they will reveal their traitorous nature once again, especially as some of them are still alive that fought in the War against us. The Kaltorans are foolish to be so accomodating to them."

– Tiberius Valeria,
Legion Consul of the Prime Branch.

"They are an empathic people with many great warriors that are motivated by principal and not money. This is a refreshing change to the norm that appears to dominate Haven culture, and something that can be directed to our advantage."

– Eiko_003,
Palantor Blue Spark tactician.

"We were once an incredibly united people during the early days of our reincarnation when the All-Embodiment teacher walked among us. Yet we are not called to be united! We are called to honour and enjoy our god. Many of us will leave the faith during these hard days, but others will join us and we will be all the healthier for their addition to our number."

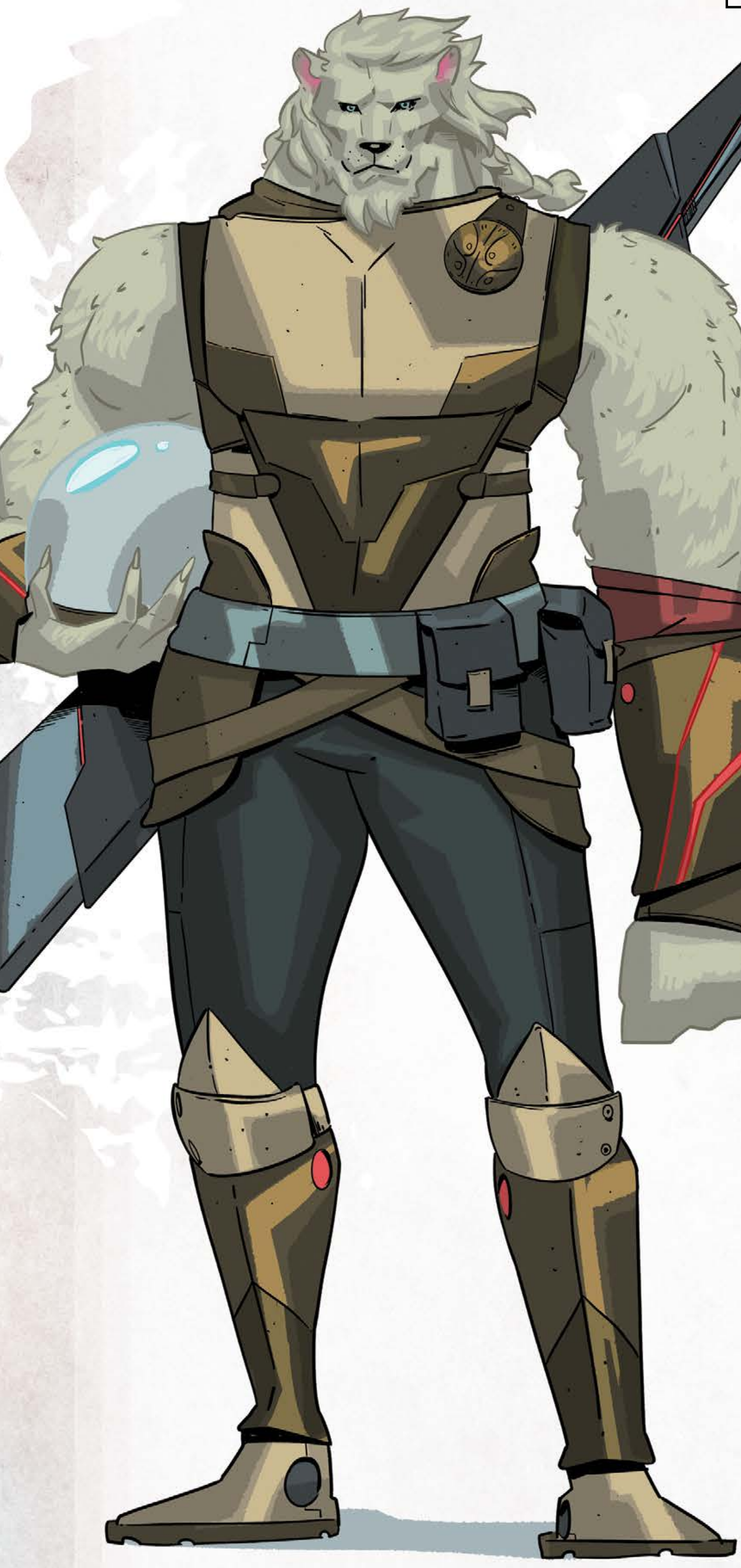
– Chatunga Itsva,
Remnant All-Monk.

"The Remnant bring another valuable spiritual perspective to the universe. Joining us Twi-Far and a few Kaltorans in seeing reality as more than just the material. Though we may disagree over the ethereal, we both value deeper truth and heart."

– Papin Fairsky,
Twi-Far Phoenix Symphony seeker.

"They like to talk of this 'god'. I don't know what it is, possibly some kind of giant flying man?"

– Zipilio,
Zhou White Tide Trader nomad.



Refugees

- **Common Motivations:** Survival, community well-being.
- **Common Characteristics:** Hard working, optimistic, thrifty.
- **Common Names & Family Names:**
  - Same as All-Faith, see pg: 148.
- **Population:** 18.5% of Remnant have left the Kumba system.
- **Common Traits:**
  - Thrifty (Resources), Driven (Focus), Presence (Leadership), Agriculture (Planets), Hold Ground (Heavy Arms).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Phase Beam Gun, Kinetic Shell, Cudgel Melee, Functional Durable Clothing, Survival Pack, Motion Sensors, Physical/Mechanics/Planets Toolbox.

"It takes a brave soul to uproot your life to travel to a distant world to make a new home. Especially if that new land is to be the dangerous jungles of Mishpacha.

I'm eager to meet more of those who can maintain their pioneer spirit, and I care not that they were the enemies of my great-great-grandparents whome I never met."

– Jasmine Silverwitch,
Corp Neon Hunter.

The protective power of the holy Simba Mabwes are declining and the Gutas of Kumba Prime are slowly being overrun by the ghostly Echoes. The Remnant do not know why the All-Being is withdrawing his power from their land, but they know they have limited time to leave their homeworld and resettle in the distant system of Haven.

The three-and-a-half-month journey is arduous and often completed on cramped spacecraft without the use of stasis pods. The captains of these ships are hailed as heroes by the Remnant, as they travel back and forth for years at a time to relocate their people to safety.

Preparing a ship for this journey requires the mobilization of an entire community. Not only to gather together resources for the trek and the establishment of a colony at the other end, but also to select the correct balance of passengers according to needs and available skills.

While the captain of a ship is permanent, their crew are regularly rotated out and supplemented by the skills of their passengers. In this way, refugees are given hands-on life-or-death experience with maintaining equipment and working together as a team in a confined space. And ideal training experience for the life that awaits them in Haven.

Golden Trail of Blood

The path between Kumba and the Haven system is known as the **Golden Trail**, named after the first vessel to reach Haven and return with news of the other surviving species. Along this path there are two star systems and the crossing of a dangerous Ley Line.

Previous vessels and All-Monks have established a range of fuel depots and repair points along the way, but ships are encouraged to only pull out of Jump Space after they have departed Kumba if there are no other options. Pirates, feral Nephilim, Mechonids and even the occasional Oni are starting to be attracted to this pathway of prey.

Early refugee vessels discarded their armaments to free up cargo space, but they must now prepare for conflict. Mercs have also been hired to patrol the final stretch of the Golden Trail and to resupply the emergency stop points. Financially successful Remnant have also been known to fund small convoys out to Kumba Prime to secure passage for their families and friends.

Crest Colonies

» See Rachel Swagger's Guide to Mishpacha pg: 85 for a full write-up on this location.

The small continent of Crest on the planet Mishpacha contains the largest population of Remnant in the Haven system, and is dominated by twin Gutas: the inland **Ndarira** and the coastal **Dziva**.

Growing Influence & New Coins

It is only a matter of time before the Remnant generate a monumental shift in the culture and economy of the Haven system. For now, they are few in number and have limited resources, but with each passing year their population grows along with their wealth. And once they have finished ferrying people from their home system they will have a fleet of ships to put to alternative use.

The Remnant are a gifted, resourceful, driven and cohesive people with an established culture, government and military force. All of this makes the Corp and Legion particularly nervous as they have enjoyed dominant positions within these spheres of influence for many years.

The Remnant of Kumba still make use of ancient Archon-created algorithms to distribute resources, but inspired by the Corp many colonies have begun to mint their own coins and promissory notes for local use. Money from the Mishpachan Gutas of Ndarira and Dziva are widely accepted across Haven. Ever-eager to disrupt Corp interests the Kaltorans have even begun to make use of Remnant currency for small transactions among themselves. Corp and Auxilia Legion refuse to accept Remnant money.

Unfortunately, Remnant coins is easily forged by those with the right equipment and resources, which has prompted Remnant leaders to start working with the Palantor to create a more advanced currency that will carry them into the future.

The Twi-Far and Palantor are particularly excited about the Remnant moving into Haven, as they are far more likely to trade in good will rather than money when helping them to combat their Oni and Mechonid foes. The Eden Brood Nephilim are eager to keep that Remnant at a distance, as they fear their shared connections to the X'ion may generate political trouble.

Holy Simba Mabwes

During his ministry the All-Embodiment blessed seemingly mundane objects and locations with great power. These holy relics and sites are known as Simba Mabwes, and have historically offered protection from Echoes and amplified the power of nearby All-Monks. A Simba Mabwe can be anything, from a broken piece of pottery to a grand stone sculpture, and all Gutas are built around their vital – but faltering – protection.

Endless Pot

This great relic was lost on its way to Haven when the ship transporting it from the evacuated Guta of **Kureba Muti** was attacked by Bloodied Coin pirates. It is thought to have been sold to a Corp art collecter.

Fountain of Seeing

Little more than a trickle of water out of a rusted pipe, this pool occasionally grants visions of the future and is constantly watched by All-Monks from the Guta of **Chokwadi Mvura**.

Shard of Healing

Arguably the most powerful of all Simba Mabwes, this shard of broken pottery has banished millions of Echoes and consistently amplifies all nearby All-Power healing. But it is faltering and expected to lose all power within the next year.

Weeping Statue

A great fallen stone statue to the Ursai war criminal **Maita Simba** in the Guta of **Misodzi**. Maita not only experimented on millions of Kaltorans, Legion and Ursai who were loyal to the Archons, but she was also resurrected by the All-Being and currently lives an isolated life in the deserts of Kumba Prime.

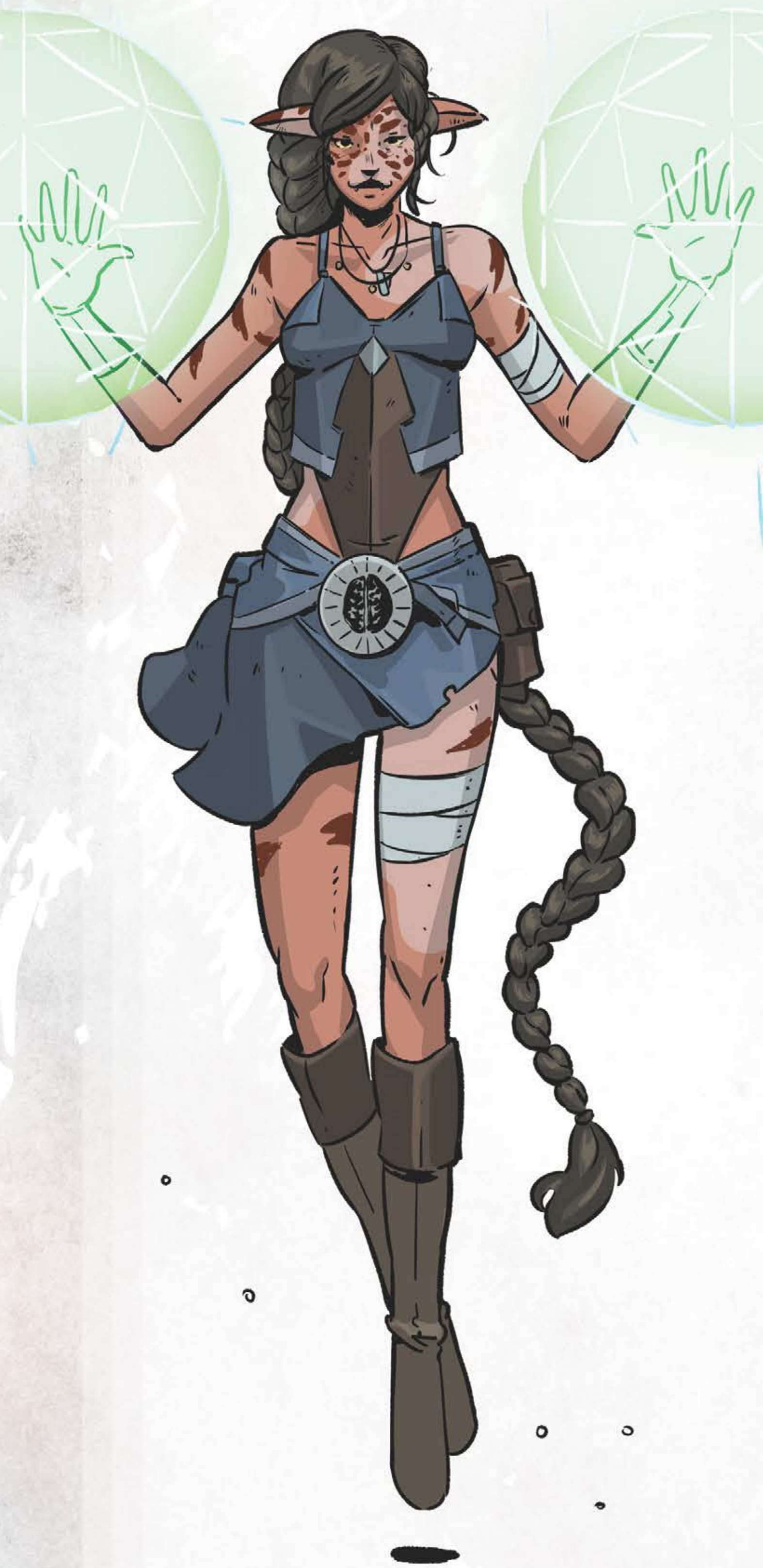
Technology

Refugees and the ship crews that transport them are willing to use any equipment that can help them. It is not uncommon to see colonists with Kaltoran arc-fire guns, Corp Synth Steel pre-fab homes and even genetically augmented Nephilim crops.

Mutsvene Weave (Slick Weave)

Was an ancient pre-War coarse fabric that was popular among the Ursai upper class and is created from the excretions of the large foot-long Mutsvene grubs that are native to Kumba Prime. This formerly rare material has become common among all Remnant due to the swarms of Nephilim-mutated Mutsvene grubs that multiplied in extraordinary numbers after the activation of the Deatomiser.

Mutsvene grubs thrive in hot environments, and the Weave made from their excretions offers a moderate amount of protection that is comparable to Kaltoran and Corp-made Slick Weave armour. Mutsvene Weave is used as an everyday fabric by all Remnant and skilled All-Monks can even balance upon its imperfections to give themselves the appearance of levitation.



Psion Mind (All-Mind Heretics)

- **Common Motivations:** Self-improvement, science.
- **Common Characteristics:** Confident, logical, pragmatic.
- **Common Names:** Same as All-Faith, see pg: 148.
- **Common Family Names:** Denga, Gomo, Rwizi, Tariro.
- **Population:** 17.81% of Remnant.
- **Common Traits:**
  - Psion (Resources), Higher Education (Intelligence), Spirit Guide (Psychology), Regular Workout, (Physical), Healthy Living (Medicine), Martial Tempo (Tactical).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Phase Beam/Plasma Gun, Arcane, Echo Companion, Arc-Fire Melee, Skill Durable Clothing, Energised Plates Assault Suit, Euthanization Kit, Psychology/Physical Toolbox.

> "The All-Mind is a powerful entity, but it – as with the All-Being – is no god. When we die we will add our minds to its grand consciousness and further its growth. Guard yourself against foolishness and rot, lest you drag the All-Mind down with you."
>
> – Tonderai Pfungwa,
> All-Mind Muchengeti.

There are many divergent opinions within Remnant society about the All-Being and its grander purposes and true nature. The Psion Mind is a large faction that believes it is not a god but a psionic amalgamation of billions of dead Remnant and Nephilim minds that have merged into a single powerful, self-deluded and narcissistic entity. They believe there are multiple All-Entities, a pantheon of great beings that are formed from the dead.

The Psion Mind understand that psionic powers are derived from nanite machines and Ley Dust. They do not see All-Power as divine intervention, but as a unique form of psionics that has not yet been satisfactorily studied by their scientists. Just as nanites offer power over mind and time, Jump Drives (presumably) allow trans-dimensional travel, All-Power offers control over the body... but at the whims of the selfish All-Being.

The Psion Mind strongly believe the All-Faith religion requires reforming, and that its All-Monks are using fairy tales and misguided trust in the All-Embodiment to construct a theology around what they do not understand. In contrast, the Psion Mind are a deeply logical, scientific and pragmatic people who do not believe in the divine.

All-Mind

Much of the Psion Mind culture orbits around a single great endevour; the creation of a new All-Entity that they call the All-Mind. This great entity is currently in its infancy and must hide from the dangerous All-Being, but with time and care they hope for it to rival the power of all other All-Entities.

When a person dies within a Psion Mind's Guta a psionic **Muchengeti** steward (also known as a **Keeper**) will guide their mind towards where they sense the All-Mind currently resides. This has long been within the great Kumba Prime deserts, but they now sense that it has moved to Haven. To have one's mind contribute to the All-Mind is considered a great honour and a sign that a person has lived a life of value.

In contrast, unwanted minds are guided away from the All-Mind by the Muchengeti, often through euthanasia. Criminals, the sick, the stupid, unwanted children, mentally declined elderly and the abnormal are all killed by Muchengeti and their assistants in sterile white rooms with painless poisons.

This refining of their population has resulted in the Psion Mind enjoying greater prosperity and a very healthy and well-educated population. The Psion Mind are vocally proud of this effect on their culture, while the All-Faith decries them as murderers and heretics.

The Psion Mind tends to attract the fit, intelligent and confident to their numbers, while they drive many of the broken and misfits to the All-Faith religion or All-Truth cults. There are those within the Psion Mind who are deeply worried about the effect their culture's disdain for the weak is having on the All-Mind. They a concerned that they are creating a powerful All-Entity that will despise and seek to kill the weak and unwanted.

Veneration of Education

All-Faith schools depend upon donations and tend to be large and minimalistic institutions that are led by kind ascetic All-Monks and their assistants. They focus on rudimentary education, discipline and ensuring the health and well-being of all students. Higher education is primarily theological and aimed at creating more All-Monks, with some small technical schools for gifted students.

In contrast, Psion Mind schools receive large amounts of public funding and are seen as venerable institutions. Psion Mind teachers occupy the upper crusts of their society, and are often called upon to guide political and public policies. While gifted students battle over valuable scholarships and internship programs that will define the rest of their lives.

The most prestigious of these schools is the **Chekutanga College**, a boarding school that houses four thousand students on Kumba Prime and is responsible for shaping some of the Remnant's greatest minds, which also includes several who have controversially joined the All-Faith and All-Truth.

Muchengetis psions are hand-selected and trained in the secret **Pfungwa Academy** where they learn to both kill and heal. Most see them as simple medical professionals, but the Academy trains them to be so much more. With the Remnants arrival in Haven, many Muchengetis stewards have been given new purpose: to travel the stars so that they may guide the minds of all who die.

Physical Divergence

While most Remnant are feline in appearance, this was not the case before their resurrection by the All-Being. Ursai had a wide range of ethnicities that included more bear, rodent, rabbit and ox-like appearances. The locations where the resurrection occurred on Kumba Prime just happened to be near large feline communities. Feline Remnant are the norm, but non-felines and mixed ethnic families can be found in nearly all Gutas.

Remnant are incredibly physically diverse, allowing some to be larger and stronger than a Legion, while others may be just several feet tall at full maturity and more intelligent than a Palantor. Their impressive physical traits stem from their incredibly dense DNA, a masterwork of genetic engineering by the early Archons who undoubtedly used much of themselves as a blueprint.

In a raw sense, Remnant are superior to most other species as the average person has greater physical and mental ability (yet another unearned feature that irks the Corporation). But over time their Archon creators began to see them as plain, lacking in any unique gifts apart from temperature-adjusting fur that would allow them to live in a wide range of environments.

Technology

The Psion Mind are proud of their scientific rigours and prioritisation of knowledge. They are also well-known for their large universities, many with sizable research divisions.

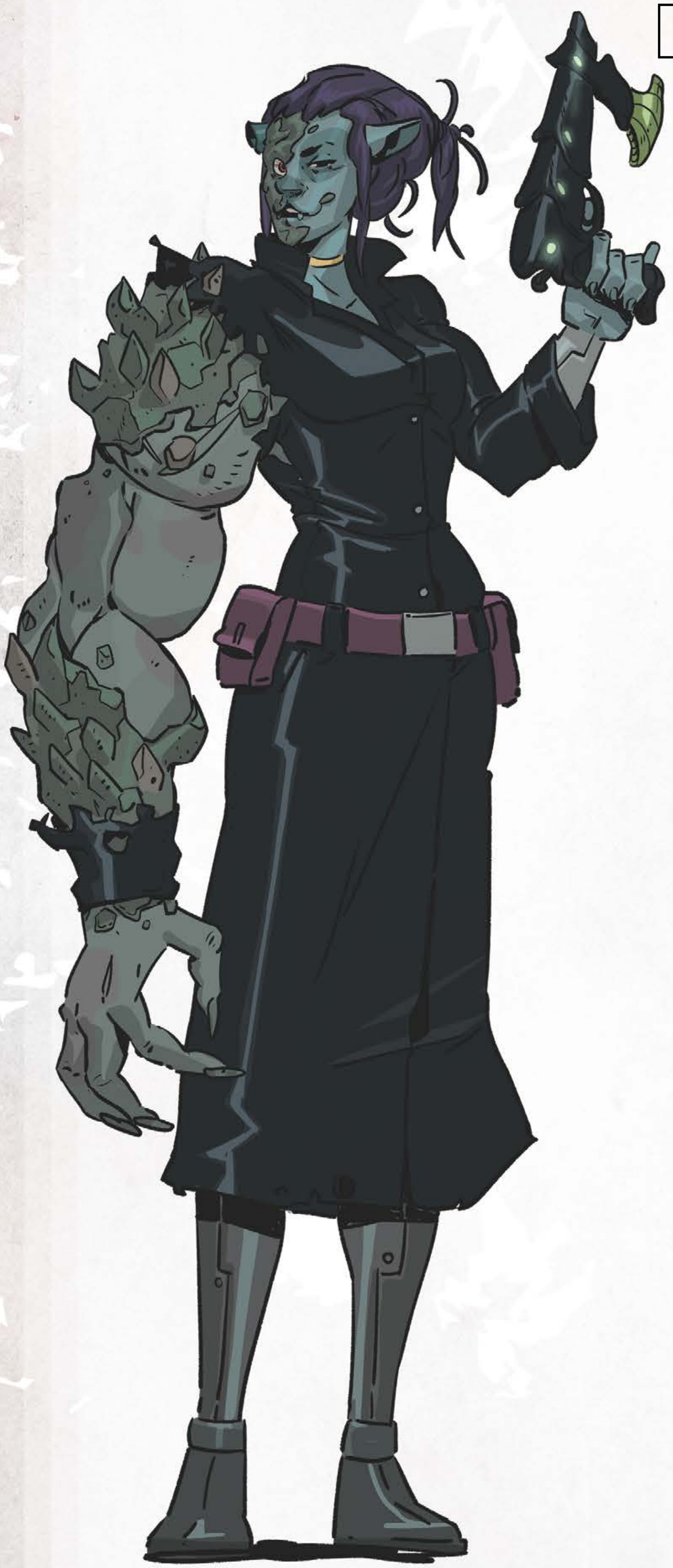
Psionics (Arcane Skill)

» See Rule Book pg: 27 for a full write-up on Psionics.

When the Ursai activated the Deatomiser they released swarms of Human-made nanites that can re-wire specific brains to allow a person to perform psionic abilities. Kumba Prime being ground-zero for these nanites has resulted in a larger percentage of Remnant people with psionic powers.

The Psion Mind are particularly keen on attracting psions to their cause with promisis of mentorships and funding. Training up new psions is not only vital for their continuation of the Muchengeti and growth of the All-Mind, but also to create a power balance against their All-Monk rivals.

> "While most Muchengeti are just underkeepers and cultural stewards of their people's death rites. Some are psionic killers who are trained to hunt down both the worthy and the unworthy, forcing the minds of the latter into oblivion and the former into the psionic maw of their 'not-god' All-Mind."
>
> – Zendaya Chengetedzwa,
> All-Monk.



All-Truth (Cults of X’ion)

- **Common Motivations:** Power, scientific advancement.
- **Common Characteristics:** Focused, intelligent, proud, ruthless.
- **Common Names:** Same as Nephilim, see pg: 113.
- **Population:**
  - 3.18% of Remnant (estimated).
  - 0.015% of Eden Brood Nephilim (estimated).

- **Common Traits:**
  - Vivomancer (Resources), Tough/Massive (Strength), Preacher/Intimidating (Leadership), Servant of X’ion/Gene Weaver (Bio-Tech), Tooth & Claw (Exotic).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Phase Beam/Plasma Gun, Arcane, Melee Companion, Bone Melee, Regen Assault Suit, Mobile Bio Printer, Aggressive Stance, Bio-Tech/Medicine Toolbox.

> “Yes, the All-Being is a monster, but if the ultimate being is such a creature then it is the path that we must follow. Morality is naught but a social construct to pacify the masses and ease the minds of the weak. Let them follow their comfortable self-deceptions of a loving god, for I will follow the true lord of all; the X’ion, the All-Being.”
>
> – Grishnick ‘The Dark Eye’,
> Painful Truth over Comfortable Lies, Vol XII.

The All-Truth is a controversial faction that sees the All-Being as the X’ion. They believe their ancestors were raised from the dead as payment for their loyal service during the Great War and as amends for the actions of the traitorous Nephilim Brood that attacked them and created the Synaptagen virus.

Those that follow the All-Truth rarely have their own Gutas and tend to secretly live among other Remnant. Some don’t even mix with other followers of the All-Truth, keeping their true thoughts to themselves and hoping that no psionic ever discovers their secret beliefs. This is an isolating life that often results in them becoming wandering Gunzvenzve nomads or joining a pirate faction.

In private they call themselves Ursai, believe the All-Power is a unique form of psionics (just as the Psion Mind also believe) and see the All-Embodiment teacher as a traitorous fraud that subverted the truth of who the All-Being is. They see the X’ion as the pinnacle of all creation and believe it will one day return to separate the weak from the strong. This current Age is a giant test to see who can survive and flourish without their Archon or X’ion creator.

Political Thorn

The All-Truth gather most of their recruits from disenfranchised Remnant and Nephilim who have lost faith in their leaders, or from nomadic Gunzvenzve, outlaws or mercs who are seeking power. They are thought to be small in number, though to the vexation of the Devwi-Ich there is a large concentration of them on the planet Mishpacha near its city of **Gaj-Osh**, and on the planet Eden.

The All-Truth are a constant political thorn in the side of the Remnant as they give weight to criticisms from the Corp, Kaltorans and Legion who see their people as X'ion loyalist traitors. All-Truth followers are a strong-willed and secretive faction that excel in recruitment and are almost impossible to root out through force or deprogramming. They are also becoming more skilled at blending into regular Remnant and Eden Brood Nephilim society.

Sects

The All-Truth is primarily seen as a single antagonistic faction, but within the spectrum of its beliefs there are several sects, each with varying opinions on the nature of the X'ion.

Dawn

A new and tiny sect that believes the X'ion is repentant of its actions during the Great War and is trying to make amends through the healing gift of the All-Power and by withdrawing itself from the galaxy so that others may prosper without its distorting presence.

Some see the Dawn sect as an All-Faith faction, as a stepping stone towards (or back from) more extreme All-Truth beliefs, or as an irrelevant group that will soon fade away. But what makes them stand out is that unlike all other non-All-Faith adherents they have been known to use All-Power and to receive prophetic dreams from the All-Being. This has significant theological ramifications for those of the All-Faith as it shows that the Dawn sect have the approval of the All-Being.

The sect was founded by **Anoona Kumusoro**, a former terrorist and member of the Midnight sect who changed her beliefs after she received a dream from the X'ion/All-Being. Anoona is thought to have been killed by Eden Brood assassins after she was found proselytizing on Eden.

Dusk

A small sect that hates the X'ion but respects and fears its great power. Most see them as a quirky doomsday-prepper cult that is mostly just fixated on surviving the return of the X'ion.

This faction would have been assimilated by force into the Midnight sect if it were not for their powerful psionic leader **Rudo Denga** and his enslaved Nephilim Echo hounds. Rudo lived as a nomadic Gunzvenzve for all of his life on Kumba Prime before smuggling himself to Haven after the Midnight sects attempt on his life. He is a large, old and very eccentric man with a pathological distrust of authority. He also makes a meagre living by posting tutorials and vlogs to Corp streams.

The Dusk sect tends to live in secret camps and have many talented psions. It is rumoured that they have infiltrated the Psion Mind's Muchengeti, but to what end no one knows.

Midnight

The largest sect, venerates the X'ion and wishes to see the Ursai nation restored alongside the creation of a new X'ion-loyal Nephilim Brood without the Devwi-Ich.

They have a tendency to splice Nephilim genetics into their own and are among history's greatest gene weavers, surpassing most of the Eden Brood and possibly even the Archons. When among their own people they flaunt their organic modifications and have a tendency to wear ancient war-time Ursai uniforms. When most people think of the All-Truth cult, they are thinking of the monstrous Midnight sect.

The sect is led by the fearsome **Grijilix**, a psychotic hybrid Remnant-Nephilim who controls the sect through fear of his genetically engineered monsters. Originaly known as Commander Wataida Chekutanga, he was alive during the Great War and oversaw multiple camps that exterminated and experimented on millions of Kaltoran POWs. He died in a Kaltoran uprising long before the Nephilim turned on the Ursai. Why the All-Being would return such a monster to life is a point of much theological difficulty for the All-Faith.

Twilight

A large faction that commonly works alongside the Midnight sect. They venerate the X'ion in a similar way but do not care for the return of the pre-war Ursai nation.

The Twilight sect is known for its many Nephilim members, Genocrat leader **Ri-Kijidosh**, and their frequent clashes with the Eden Brood and Legion. While some of its members are drawn from the Eden Brood and Remnant, most are elevated feral Nephilim. Ri-Kijidosh appears to be particularly gifted and knowledgeable with all things related to his feral kin.

Technology

As the various All-Truth sects tend to hide among other cultures, they usually just make use of the technologies that are available to them, often Remnant or Nephilim.

The Dusk sect is well known for their psionic powers, and are particularly gifted at enslaving Echoes. While the Midnight sect have some of the galaxies greatest gene weavers and are infamous for their immoral experimentations.

> "The Ursai were vile traitors during the War and these new Remnant show themselves to be the same."
> – Aegeus Ironmight,
> Legion Auxilia after fighting All-Truth raiders.

Echoes (NPC)

- **Common Motivations:** as per previous life.
- **Creator:** Ursai (via the Deatomiser).

- **Example Names:**
  - Same as Remnant (from pg: 148) and Nephilim (see pg: 113).

- **Common Rivals:** Remnant.

"Spasmodic movement pulled my attention to the end of the alley where a Nephilim Echo spilled through the wall of a decrepit sand-blasted building. It passed through the solid surface with ease, in defiance of all reality's laws. A twisted field of warped distortion surrounded the translucent ghost as if nature itself abhorred the being's existence. The universe seemed to freeze as the creature locked its empty eyes on me. Its weapon, a ghostly manifestation of an ancient organic rifle, slowly rising as I began to flee."

– Adashe Itsva,
Fade of the Simba Mabwe at the Guta of Mutsvene.

Created by accident when the ancient Ursai activated the Human-made Deatomiser, the Kumba system is now infested by tortured psionic ghosts that are known as Echoes. Some have even started to appear around Haven and stories of newly created Echoes from horrible deaths are commonplace among spacecraft crew.

Echoes are Ley Dust infused psionic manifestations of a person reliving a key time from their life or the moments before their death. Their thoughts and perceptions of reality are twisted and painful, making them incredibly dangerous as they lash out at their environment with ghostly weapons, fear-inducing screams and a rotting touch.

All in the Mind

A curious feature about Echoes is that their entire being stems from their perception. They are as strong and as fast as they imagined they were in life and may only be harmed by non-Ley Dust weapons that they believe they should be harmed by.

Overconfident people will be more dangerous as Echoes, while those lacking confidence will be weaker. Subtle and invisible attacks will have a reduced effect on them, while a fake attack from a perceived lethal source will cause them harm. Ley Dust weapons (including Psionics) will always cause Echoes harm as they affect their structural integrity.

Note to GMs:

We encourage you to play up the self-perception feature of Echoes, going further than what their Species stats says about them.

Examples:

- Realistic looking holographic Companions gains +2 Crit Dmg.
- An overconfident Nephilim Genocrat that is invulnerable and must be overcome via a Skill based encounter and not Combat.

While it is possible to talk with some Echoes, nearly all appear to be incapable of accurately perceiving their environment. There are urban legends of Echoes becoming aware that they are dead, but most are dismissed as fairy tales as they always end with the Echoes coming to some kind of inner peace and disappearing. Powerful psions, especially Muchengetis from the Psion Mind faction, have been known to enslave Echoes to use as weapons.

Different Species

Nearly all Echoes are Ursai and Nephilim from the Great War, but some are from other species and from recent times.

Kaltorans can be complex echoes as they have multiple memories and self-perceptions in their mind from their genetic memories. They fight with speed and precision and grow in power as allied Echoes are defeated.

Legion echoes tend to be resilient and single-minded, often acting out a failed combat mission that led to their deaths. Overly confident Legion special forces and decorated commanders can be particularly dangerous.

Mechonid Echoes are rare but can be immensely dangerous. Some still see themselves as they did in the Network, gods who are able to remake themselves and their environment at will, or as avatars in a game. While others are insane and have amorphous forms that defy reality.

Nephilim Echoes are common and can vary widely in power due to their self-perception. Subservient Nephilim will often be weak, while their commanders can be nearly indestructible. Echoes of Nephilim spacecraft are also fairly common within Kumba where they tend to gather together into small fleets.

Despite Nephilim soldiers commonly being made up of multiple creatures during the Great War – living armour, weapons, etc... – the equipment of an Echoes tends to only come from the mind of the primary creature.

Twi-Far make for exotic Echoes that commonly come in pairs. With one being the Twilinger portion that is imagining its Faren, while the other is the Faren portion imagining its Twilinger.

Ursai Echoes from the Great War are common and offer a glimpse into what their people were like before they became the Remnant. They show sophisticated clothing, advanced weaponry, a strong desire to fight their enemies and a wide range of non-feline ethnicities. In truth, the feline-Ursai were generally seen as part of a lower socioeconomic class before the war.

Zhou Echoes have not yet been seen and it is widely speculated about what their nature will be. They may take on a swarm-like form, or possibly as ravenous beasts that will quickly grow in size and have a fear of fire.

Twi-Far (Twilinger)

- **Creator:** Archons (Divine Circles faction).
- **Average Height:** 1.58m
- **Average Life Span:** 68 (72 natural) years.
- **Population:** 3.2 million.
- **Principle Settlements:** Mishpacha and Roost fleet (Haven).
- **Government:** Federation of spacecraft (Choir and Chorus).
- **Primary Exports:** Art (Corporation), spacecraft salvage (Legion), star charts (Corporation and Kaltoran),
- **Primary Imports:** Enforcement.

- **Common Allies:** Faren, Zhou.
- **Common Rivals:** Oni, Zhou.

"Communing with our Farens is difficult. They speak in feelings, physical twitches, dreams, nudges of thought and flashes of light."

– Curca Astral,
Phoenix Symphony.

The Twilinger were specifically created by the Archons to gather energy from Prism, a tri-star system that was located just outside the current borders of their empire. Prism's stars emit unique forms of solar radiation that could be mixed with rare local minerals to create a source of energy that could fuel the majestic Human-created Xana Quattuoria station. The golden sphere of Xana was the seat of political power for the Archons and was where they performed their grand attempts to create the perfect – X'ion – species. It also housed the most advanced Archon laboratories and numerous powerful Human-era artefacts.

The Twilinger performed their duties well and came to be known as the stewards of Xana and the guardians of the Divine Circles faction. When the X'ion and the Nephilim attacked Xana during the instigation of the Great War the Archons worked the Twilinger population to death to power their Human-era superweapons, and conscripted them into a poorly organised militia. The Twilinger died in the billions to both Archons and Nephilim. This shattered what remained of the Twilinger and they abandoned the Archons and their war, leaving for the dark depths of uncharted space, not to return for over a hundred years.

Out in the void of space the Twilinger lived as nomads in their spacecraft and came upon stars and worlds that even ancient Humanity had not visited. Among the many wonders they witnessed were swarms of alien-like energy beings that they named Faren. The two species merged. By accident at first, a result of Twilinger genetics and starvation. Though they couldn't openly communicate with each other, the two species formed a symbiotic relationship. Thereafter known as the Twi-Far and they wandered the edges of the galaxy to explore its secrets together as one.

The introduction of the Faren into their society and bodies was revolutionary for the Twi-Far. Not only gifting them with amazing powers and insights but also re-energizing their culture and confidence about their place in the universe. No longer were they a broken people slinking about in the dark voids, they were now a vibrant and joyful society with purpose and hope.

The Twi-Far also came upon another species, the Oni, a peculiar single-strain brood of giant four-armed Nephilim who destroyed or enslaved everyone outside of their genus. The Oni saw the nomadic Twi-Far as a welcome source of fresh slaves and supplies. The Twi-Far had no choice but to flee, but the Oni were always in pursuit, able to follow them by some unknown means. The Twi-Far were forced to abandon many of their nomadic traditions, gathering together in larger fleets and eventually return to the Archon's fallen empire so that they may find some means of defending themselves from the relentless threat of the Oni.

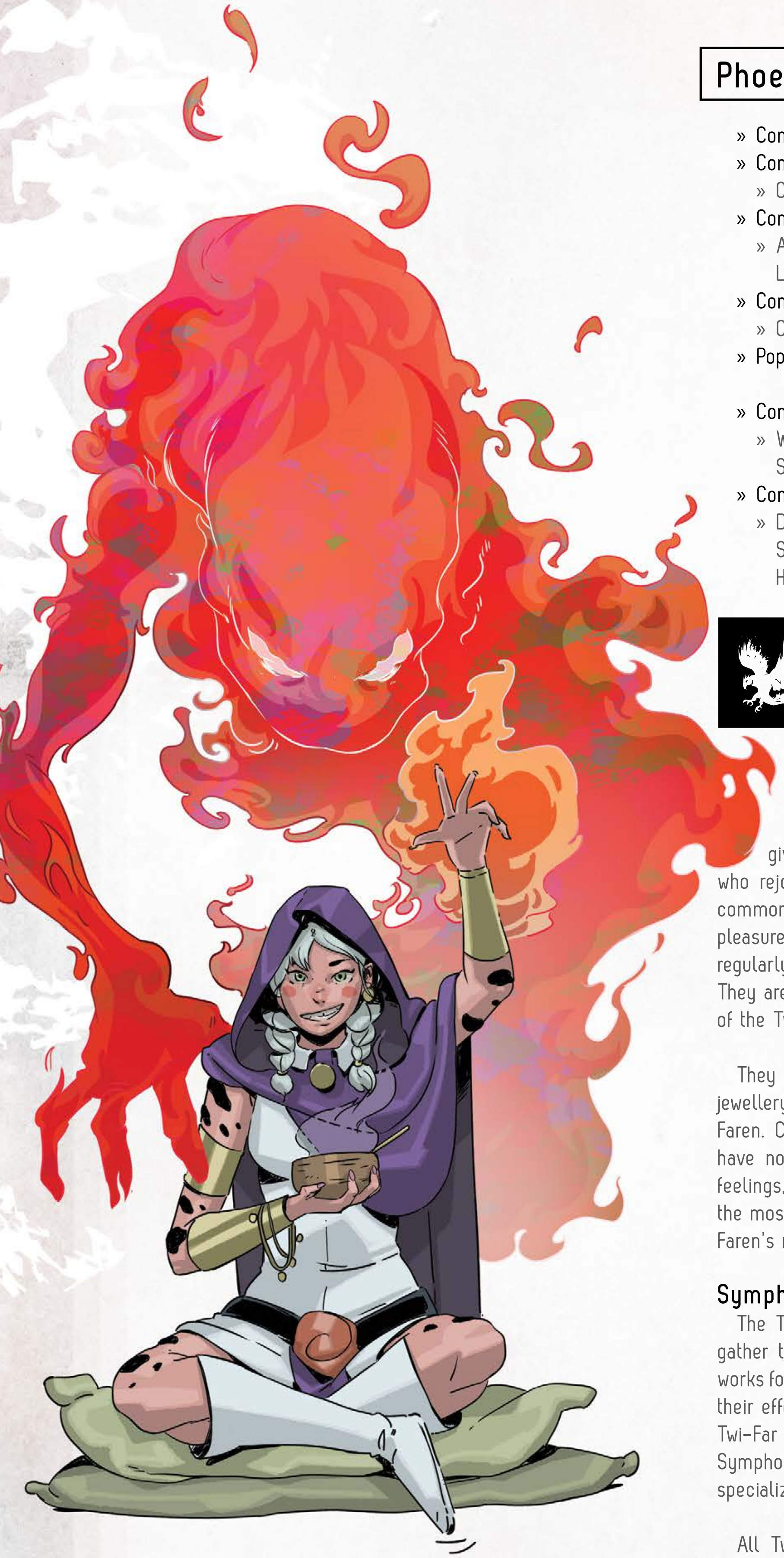
On their return to the fallen empire the Twi-Far encountered the Zhou on the planet Praid, but perceived the danger that they posed. Keeping the location of Praid secret they pushed on and encountered small colonies of people who had travelled from Haven.

On arrival to Haven they were surprised to see so many species working alongside one another to create a new society. They pleaded with them for help, but the threat of the Oni was never acknowledged until one of their great World Ships Jumped into the Monopoly Belt. United behind the Corp Keva Castiglione, the various species put together a force to attack the Oni, but after disabling its primary engines the fighting force disbanded. None were willing to expend the resource and lives needed to finish the job. The great Oni World Ship still floats among the rocks of the Monopoly Belt, sending out the occasional clunky raider or drop ship to Mishpacha as it seeks to repair itself and contact other Oni.

◆ ◆ ◆

The Twi-Far are beautiful, insightful, resourceful and are renowned for their keen love of aesthetics. All of these combine to make them easy to like on a personal level, but the rulers of the Eden Brood, Corporation and Palantor do not appreciate them. Their small numbers and self-sufficient nature mean they contribute very little to the economy of the region, and they have not only undoubtedly led the Oni to Haven but also introduced the dangerous Zhou and Faren. When the Oni do arrive they will be unable to contribute significant military power and will be prone to once again flee out into space if things get too difficult.

For now, the Twi-Far are happy to stay in Haven, with some of their Salamander Symphony faction even choosing to establish small colonies on Mishpacha and other worlds. Scientists and scouts from their Phoenix Symphony have found work selling astronomical data as they keep an eye out for the Oni and scout the region, while warriors from the Dragon Symphony maintain constant vigilance against Oni, pirates and any who may discover the location of Praid. Some have even found faith in the Remnant's All-Being god, creating the Seraphim Symphony while the troublesome Efreeti Symphony makes new friends among the region's underworld inhabitants.



Phoenix Symphony

- **Common Motivations:** New experiences, inner harmony.
- **Common Characteristics:**
  - Calm, creative, dramatic, mystical, passionate.
- **Common Names:**
  - Araunya (f), Casamir (m), Colia (m), Hanzi (m), Jeta (f), Lala (f), Mirela (f), Orchilo (m), Papin (f), Sinfi (f), Zache (m).
- **Common Family Names:**
  - Celestialspring, Enchantment, Essence, Forevertrail, Stargazer.
- **Population:** 29.02% of Twi-Far.

- **Common Traits:**
  - Well Travelled (Influence), Spirit Guide (Psychology), Astral Signals (Computers), Martial Dance (Exotic).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Disruptor Pulse Gun (Faren Blast), Special (Faren Blast), Skill/Deflector Field Tactical Suit, Astrogrix Projector, OMNI Holo Map, Electronics/Astronomy Toolbox.

"Life is a song with a beat, rhythm, chorus and a crescendo. It is best with many performers, instruments and on a large stage. Though it is not played for an audience but for one's twin spirit."

– Casamir Sunray,
Phoenix Symphony explorer.

The Phoenix is the second-largest of the Symphonies, giving them considerable cultural weight. They are a people who rejoice in the journey of life more than the destination, and commonly value exploration, freedom, passion and life's finer pleasures. They also place a larger value on their Faren bond and regularly have greater control over their Faren powers and insights They are the explorers, navigators, mystics and experimental artists of the Twi-Far.

They tend to dress in beautiful clothes, adorn themselves in jewellery and spend a portion of each day in meditation with their Faren. Communicating with a Faren is incredibly difficult as they have no known language and tend to convey faint ideas through feelings, dreams and slight physical nudges. But the Phoenixes are the most capable at this communion and are able to bring out their Faren's most unusual powers.

Symphonies

The Twi-Far have ideological factions called Symphonies, which gather together voluntarily and often form fleets. Each Symphony works for the collective good of their members and will often combine their efforts with other Symphonies to further the well-being of all. Twi-Far spacecraft and fleets will typically be dominated by a single Symphony, but with small groupings of other Symphonies to fulfil specialized roles.

All Twi-Far belong to the Symphony of their parents at birth, but they are permitted to shift Symphonies after they come of age and merge with their Faren. A person's Symphony is a reflection of their inner nature and desires. While particular vocations are most commonly associated with specific Symphonies, no one is barred from any role due to their faction. A Phoenix Symphony member may be a great warrior, just like a Dragon Symphony, it may just be that their approach to honing their craft is flavoured by a greater emotional bond with their Faren and a cunning mind rather than muscle and giant beams of energy. Members of the Phoenix Symphony are particularly well known for their broad and ever-changing skill sets, as they have a particular love of new hings and a dislike of limitations.

The Journey

To a Twi-Far, life is an adventure. They care not for hoarding physical possessions, although they generally prefer the few things they do own to be beautifully made. They rarely claim territory on planets or stake out areas of space because they have never stayed in one place long enough to feel more attached to it than to any other location in the endless garden that is the galaxy. Members of the Phoenix rejoice in this Journey more than most Twi-Far, celebrating the path over the destination.

As a bonded Twilinger and their Faren share a greater variety of experiences they will grow closer and start to anticipate each other's desires. Some Twi-Far have been known to enter a trance-like state during unique experiences, almost allowing their two minds to openly communicate and bringing about a Faren-induced vision.

Art

Life for a Twi-Far is a constant journey to experience the next wonder and see new locations. Between work and their next destination the people of the fleets like to create art that tells stories about who they are and where they've been, celebrating the joys of life and the fruits of experience. Faren love art and will give their host's body a pleasurable feeling as they experience beauty and wonder.

Their resources are relatively scarce, so the Twi-Far favour dance and music over other activities. However, they love to be surrounded by beauty, so Twi-Far sculptors and painters are given full rein to work their magic on their ships' hulls and furnishings.

Exotic wildlife romps down the corridor walls, alongside murals of distant planets and ancient legends. Clothing, tools and weapons alike are lovingly enriched with patterns and engravings. Even ship circuitry and systems do not escape a Twi-Far's need to apply beauty to every surface, even at the expense of function. Many Twi-Far also use body art to enrich their skin's naturally colourful hues.

Language: Twilinger

The modern Twilinger language has been greatly influenced and shaped by the Faren, changing their language from primarily rational to romantic. Twi-Far vocabulary has expanded to accommodate poetry, flowery prose and a much greater vocal range, making it ideal for the musical arts.

"Those people with brightly coloured skin, beaded necklaces and flowing tie-died gowns? Yes, we think we can appeal to them as a niche market by rebranding existing products."

– Jane Cure,
Corporate marketing manager for C.U.R.E.

"They're a fun people and have been incredibly helpful with providing astronomical maps for our frontier colonists. Yea, I like them sparkly star wanderers, they're nice folk."

– David Flash,
Kaltoran pioneer.

"These Twilinger play puppet to a strange parasite that we admire and wish to study. The Faren have successfully gained control over their host's entire culture, to a point where their enigmatic desires are actively pursued by their slaves."

– Bilidricks,
Nephilim culture weaver Deacon.

"Don't let their slight physical build throw you off. They can pack an impressive punch with their energy blasts and their Dragon warriors are exceptionally skilled. But watch out for that Efreeti clan, they can turn vicious in a heartbeat."

– Aileen Adamos,
Legion Auxilia merc.

"There is something about these Faren that feels familiar. A shadow of a memory perhaps, or possibly it's just that these Twi-Far have succeeded where all of Humanity has failed… the discovery of true alien life that does not trace its origin back to earth. If so, then they are among the greatest discoveries ever made, as important as Ley Lines, terraforming, digital immortality and the ability to engineer new life."

– Katashi_039,
Palantor ley engineer.

"They're a misguided people that are led by emotion, beauty and spirituality, but feeling without truth is just sentimentality, aesthetics without meaning is indulgence and faux spirituality is comforting ignorance. Let us pray for them, for our god is working in them at this very moment."

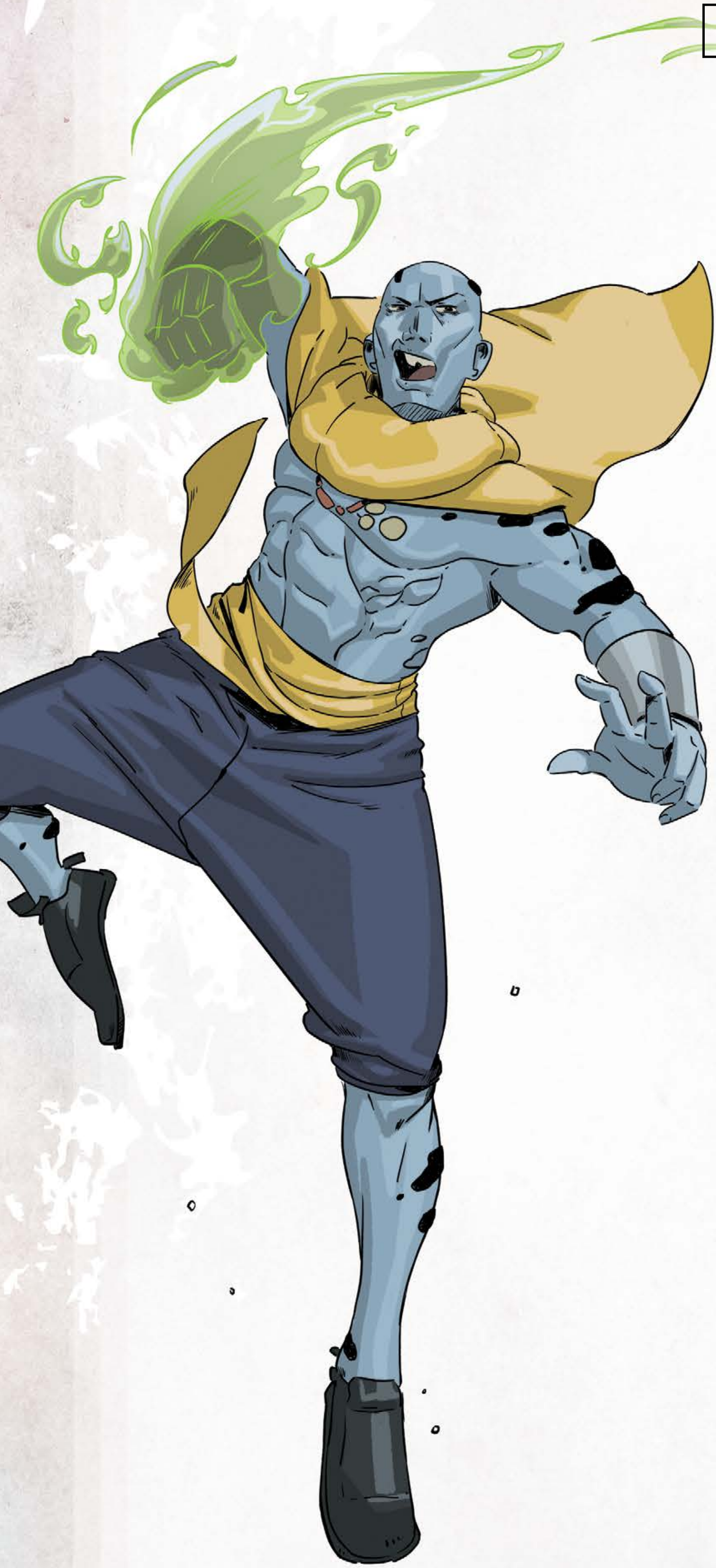
– Idanayl Chengetedzwa,
Remnant All-Monk.

"We long to return to our lives of endless travel, discovery and peace. Now we hide and wait for the coming Oni storm."

– Araunya Forevertrail,
Twi-Far Salamander solar farmer.

"We are thankful for those who took us off Praid and introduced us to the stars… but it is time for them to give us our full freedom and allow us to plot our own path."

– Zarnir,
Zhou chief of the Amber Bark Pathfinders.



Dragon Symphony

- **Common Motivations:** Personal strength, physical security.
- **Common Characteristics:** Dedicated, intense, physical.
- **Common Names & Family Names:**
  - Same as Phoenix Symphony, see pg: 162.
- **Population:** 15.09% of Twi-Far.

- **Common Traits:**
  - Dangerous Blood (Strength), Meditation (Grit), Bioluminescent (Awareness), Powerful Faren (Heavy Arms).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Kinetic/Thermal Shell (Faren Blast), Melee (Faren Blast), Fold Shroud Assault Suit, Multispectral Visor, Aggressive Stance, Serious Face, Physical/Resolve/Medicine Toolbox.

> "One must control and tend their burning soul fire, lest it consume them or splutter into naught but embers."
>
> – Oberon Stargazer,
> High Balaur master.

The Dragon Symphony tend to resist cultural change and firmly believe that the life of a Twi-Far belongs among the stars as nomads. They have always been exceptional warriors, using their unique Fursilion martial art and combat pilot skills to great effect as defenders and trailblazers for the Twi-Far fleets. But in recent years they have become militarized as they prepare for war with the Oni. Dragons value order, tradition, balance, discipline, skill and personal strength.

The Dragon's numbers have grown substantially over the past decade as the Twi-Far have increasingly fought with the Oni and other threats (such as pirates and Mechonids). This is creating a culture clash within the Twi-Far as more of their people see themselves as aggressive warriors in want of a fight and not peaceful explorers. The Dragons may resist change, but they are inevitably altering Twi-Far society.

Dragon warriors have a reputation for skill, discipline and ferocity. They are taught to channel their Faren powers into direct attacks and to utilize guerrilla warfare tactics against their enemies.

Fursilion Martial Art

Fursilion is a fighting style that was created by the Dragon Symphony to integrate their Faren powers into physical combat and to battle against foes with superior strength and numbers. It is a particularly ferocious combat style that strikes hard with large beam attacks and energised melee strikes, while always allowing for avenues of retreat. The name Fursilion literally translates as 'furnace limbs'.

The martial art is arranged into three broad tiers that are in-turn ordered into ten segmented ranks: trainee **Drake**, combat-ready **Wyrm** and the powerful **Balaur**. Many non-Dragons (and even some non-Twi-Far) are trained in Drake and all Dragons are required to achieve Wyrm to be accepted by the Symphony as an adult. Those who achieve Balaur are some of the most powerful combatants in the galaxy, able to fly with jet-like bursts of energy from their fists, fire Faren Blasts that can damage shielded spacecraft and produce energy shields that can block heavy ordinance. The three High Balaur masters are **Oberon Stargazer**, his younger sister **Aurora Stargazer** and old **Puck Longjouney** whose personal martial power is rumoured to rival the Devwi-Ich.

Achieving a rank of two to six requires the approval of your training master and the completion of a duel against one-or-more appropriate sparing partners. Rank seven to nine also requires the completion of a dangerous mission, most commonly against a nest of feral Nephilim with a supporting squad. The solo killing of any particularly dangerous foe - such as an adult Oni, large Nephilim or Mechonid Prophet - always increases a Dragon's rank, and is the only way to achieve rank ten within the Wyrm and Balaur tiers. Moving up a tier requires the approval of twenty other people of rank six or more within your tier.

Voice, Choir & Chorus

The Twi-Far believe their ships are alive in a spiritual sense and a ship's captain is said to speak for the vessel itself, they are referred to as the Voice. Although the Voice usually takes the advice of their senior crew, once an order is made it is final. When several ships gather together their Voices may form a council to decide matters affecting the whole fleet and to resolve intership disputes. This council of Voices is referred to as a Choir. The Dragon Symphony has spread itself out among many Twi-Far fleets, acting as guards and commonly include one of their Voices in most Choir meetings.

On very rare occasions all Twi-Far fleets will gather together to convene on matters affecting their entire species, hosting a meeting with all of the Voices is known as a Chorus. There have only ever been four such meetings, the latest of which decided to have the Twi-Far return to the fallen Archon empire to seek help against the Oni.

Prophecy of the Cosmic Dragon

Sixty years ago all five of the current High Balaur masters simultaneously experienced a range of Faren-induced prophetic visions while they were meeting together in a Chorus. They saw scenes of a powerful person defeating death and watering a golden seed that grew into a fruit tree. The Dragon Symphy believe that one of them will one day become this powerful person - the Cosmic Dragon - and fend off a great evil with martial power and wisdom.

The Seraphim Symphony have a different perspective. They believe these visions were not of a future event, but of the All-Being revealing himself to the universe through the resurrection of the Remnant. The Dragon Symphony have a culture of resolving arguments through sparring matches and like to challenge Twi-Far All-Monks over this contentious issue. The Dragon and Seraphim tend to each win about half of these matches.

Roost Fleet

For a century following the Great War the Twi-Far have travelled the far corners of unexplored space, salvaging what they can from long-dead Human colonies and forgotten worlds. While they prefer to keep their solar-sail fleets small and nimble, their increasing number of conflicts with the Oni have forced them to gather together for protection and resource conservation. The largest of these fleets is known as the Roost, which is seen as the nomadic capital city of the Twi-Far and often moves about the Haven system.

The Roost is commonly made up of a thousand Twi-Far vessels and more than a few from other species. Ships from all Symphonies tether themselves together to trade, socialize, and exchange technical skills, but they must all be ready to Jump at a moments notice.

The ships that make up the Roost run across the spectrum of designs, designations, classes and purposes. Though there are several similar designs among the fleet, after years of repairs and alterations each ship is unique unto itself. The sight of the glittering Roost floating through space has been described by some as one of the most beautiful sights in the universe.

Unsung Melody

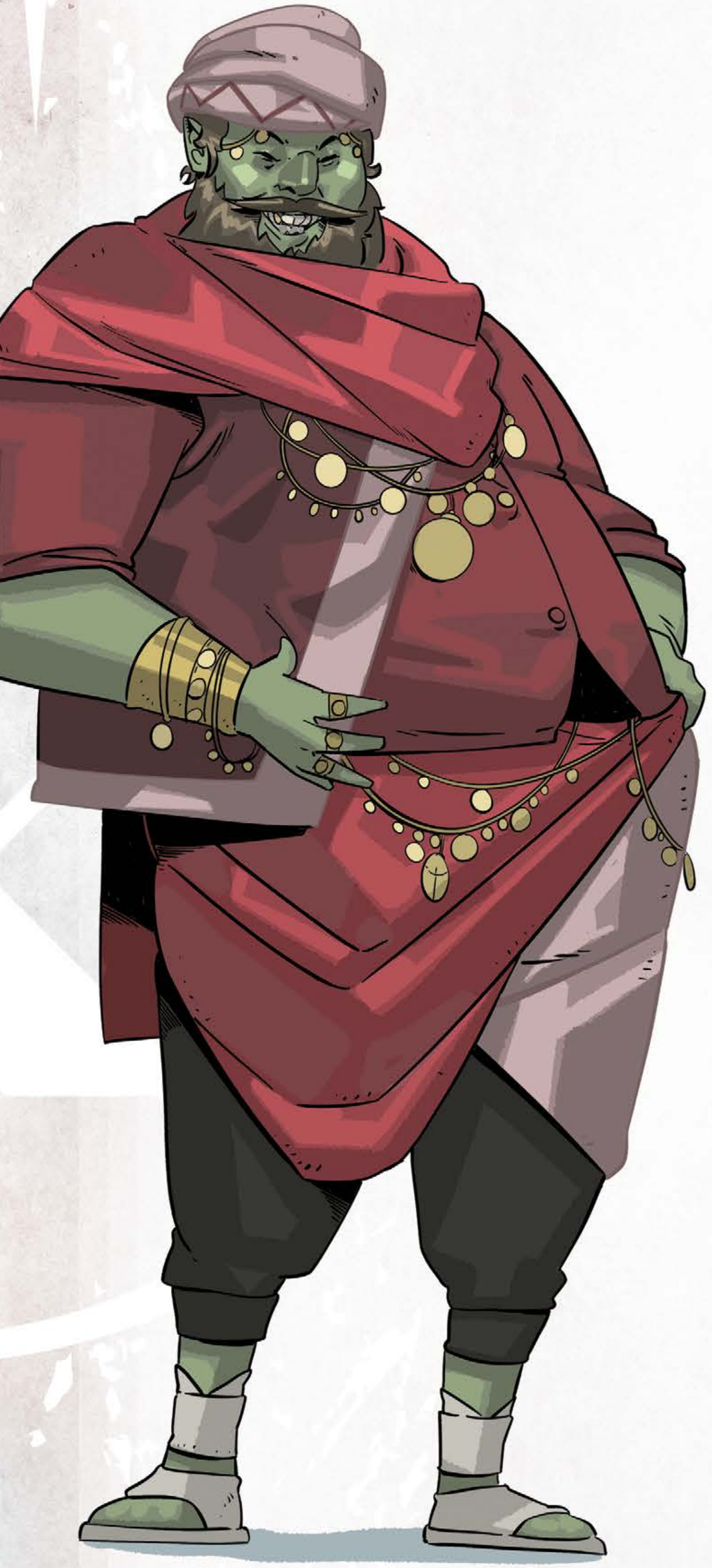
Known by the unflattering epithet as "The Orphanage" throughout the Roost, the Unsung Melody is not only home to those Twi-Far who have lost all of their possessions and families to the Oni, but also the meeting site for all major Dragon Symphony military operations. The Unsung Melody is an ageing freighter that has seen its fair share of battles but whose patchwork hull has been purposefully shined and ornamented to reflect its resilience and grand history.

The ship's Voice, known as **Mother Melody**, knows everyone's name who has lived on her ship. She is well known for her versatility and courage, as she can quickly shift from comforting a sick child to shouting complex military commands as the need arises.

Technology

As the Dragon Symphony lack many technical skills and advanced technologies they have become highly dependent on the generosity of the Phoenix and Salamander Symphonies. But these limitations are made up through the use of their powerful Farens as supplementary power sources for their spacecraft, allowing them to trade away most of their combat salvage for food and supplies.

Much of the Twi-Far's technological shortcoming are offset through their Faren powers, but these powers must be re-learned by each new generation and are dependent on the skill of individuals and the nature of their Faren. While many Faren powers are wonderous and impressive, they will each fade from existence when that Twi-Far dies and equally impressive powers are not guaranteed to rise with new Twi-Far. As the Twi-Far shift towards becoming a people of conflict, their Faren powers are becoming increasingly militaristic.



Salamander Symphony

- **Common Motivations:** Knowledge, mastery of a vocation.
- **Common Characteristics:** Creative, dedicated, patient.
- **Common Names & Family Names:**
  - Same as Phoenix Symphony, see pg: 162.
- **Population:** 37.6% of Twi-Far.

- **Common Traits:**
  - Well Travelled (Influence), Studious (Intelligence), Space Born (Astronomy), Zap (Exotic), Discretion (Engineering).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Disruptor Gun/Shell (Faren Blast), Functional/Energised Plates Assault Suit, Wpn Maintenance Kit, Mechanics/Electronics/Planets Toolbox.

"The Salamander is a peaceful beast which sings of hearth and home,
Industrious and wise, on his skills he hones.
His fire is that of industry and not of war or death.
He works for duty and family until his final breath."
– Song of the Salamander.

This large Symphony believes that all life is a journey, and they seek to enjoy and rejoice in many things that others would consider drudgeries or common; such as manual labour and research. The Salamander Symphony values peace, family, community and mastery over one's chosen craft. They are the scientist, technicians and farmers of the Twi-Far.

To the frustration of the Dragon Symphony they are also willing to abandon their nomadic lives to establish long-term colonies, such as those that have settled on the Eastern Frontier of Mishpacha. The Salamanders have many close ties with the other species, especially with the Kaltorans and Legion who they see as kindred souls. They are also not afraid to deal with Corp economics and have shown a great interest in making use of Nephilim-created FLESH drones to assist them with their manual work.

A key responsibility of the Salamanders during their nomadic time among the stars was food production, where they would tend to beautiful hydroponic farms. Each was arranged to maximise both aesthetics and production. These shipboard conservatories also provided a quiet space for tranquil contemplation and study of exotic plants from hundreds of worlds. To supplement their food stores the Salamanders would also make regular forays onto unknown worlds to gather supplies and gather samples for analysis in their laboratories.

Unlike other Twi-Far, Salamanders tend to wear thick and simple clothing that is more suited to their practical lifestyles. They are also wise enough to understand that the Dragons will not always be present to fight for them. Salamander derives most of the satisfaction from their community, and when that is threatened their Faren's become enraged. The Salamanders are fierce when defending their communities and families, and can mount a ferocious technologically-focused defence when called to combat.

Faren Slices

Those who choose to be Salamanders typically have Faren with a certain temperament that finds beauty in the small moments of everyday. These Faren will also reward their host with positive emotions whenever they fulfil a goal, reach a milestone or finish a great work. It is the satisfaction gained from completing tasks and learning new skills which drives a Salamander forward. This also includes imparting skills to others and enjoying the success of others as though it was their own. This is also why Salamanders love to be parents and make great teachers.

Salamander Faren also tend to create new Faren by breaking off slices of themselves for the children of their hosts. Many Salamander families can trace their Faren back to just one or two originals. Many from the other Symphonies – and especially the Phoenix – struggle to understand why the Salamanders would choose to do this, as most Twi-Far yearn for unexpected experiences and desire to merge with a wild Faren that no other Twi-Far has ever experienced before.

Floating Cities

» See Rachel Swagger's Guide to Mishpacha pg: 56 for a full write-up on Zerastros.

Nestled above the jungles of Mishpacha resides the largest terrestrial Twi-Far colony of Zerastros. A floating city made up of large aerostats (balloon-like buildings) that are connected by a web of organic-looking metal and cloth walkways. Below the city on the ground is a town, with electro-grav elevators for access.

The Salamanders used these aerostat buildings during their nomadic years to establish temporary resource collection and processing points as they foraged for supplies on distant worlds. While these valuable structures are still being used by Twi-Far exploration and scavenging teams, they are increasingly being used by Salamanders to create small but permanent Twi-Far colonies.

These small settlements are not only allowing them to gather much-needed resources, but also alleviate some of the other species' fears that the Twi-Far will abandon them to the Oni if they were to arrive in force. Especially as it was the Twi-Far who have led them to the Haven system. While the Dragon Symphony will protect these settlements, they are insistent on them being temporary as they want their people to remain a nomadic people among the stars.

Comfy Nest

This large Salamander spacecraft in the Roost fleet is where the gears of the Twi-Far economy intersect with those of the other species. The Comfy Nest is a retrofitted Great War carrier that was once a large university for the Twi-Far people. But its many rooms and hangars are now filled with the shouting of traders and plush coloured cushions for weary starship crew. Though many Twi-Far find the idea of such blatant capitalism off-putting, they know that the Roost has supply and resource needs, and accept the Nest for what it has become.

> "Our last fuel contract was to the Nebula-Dreamer, a Twi-Far vessel. I went aboard to meet their captain and I'll never forget what I saw!
>
> Every part of their ship was like an art gallery: etchings and murals on the walls; pipes and cables woven into subtle designs; indicator lights arranged in ornate patterns; there were even performers dancing and playing music! It was mind-boggling. The expense must have been immense! These Twi-Far are incredibly wealthy! Next time, make a note to triple our rates!"
>
> – Bearnd Silver,
> VP Interstellar Sales, Pinnacle Fuel.

Solar Sail Spacecraft

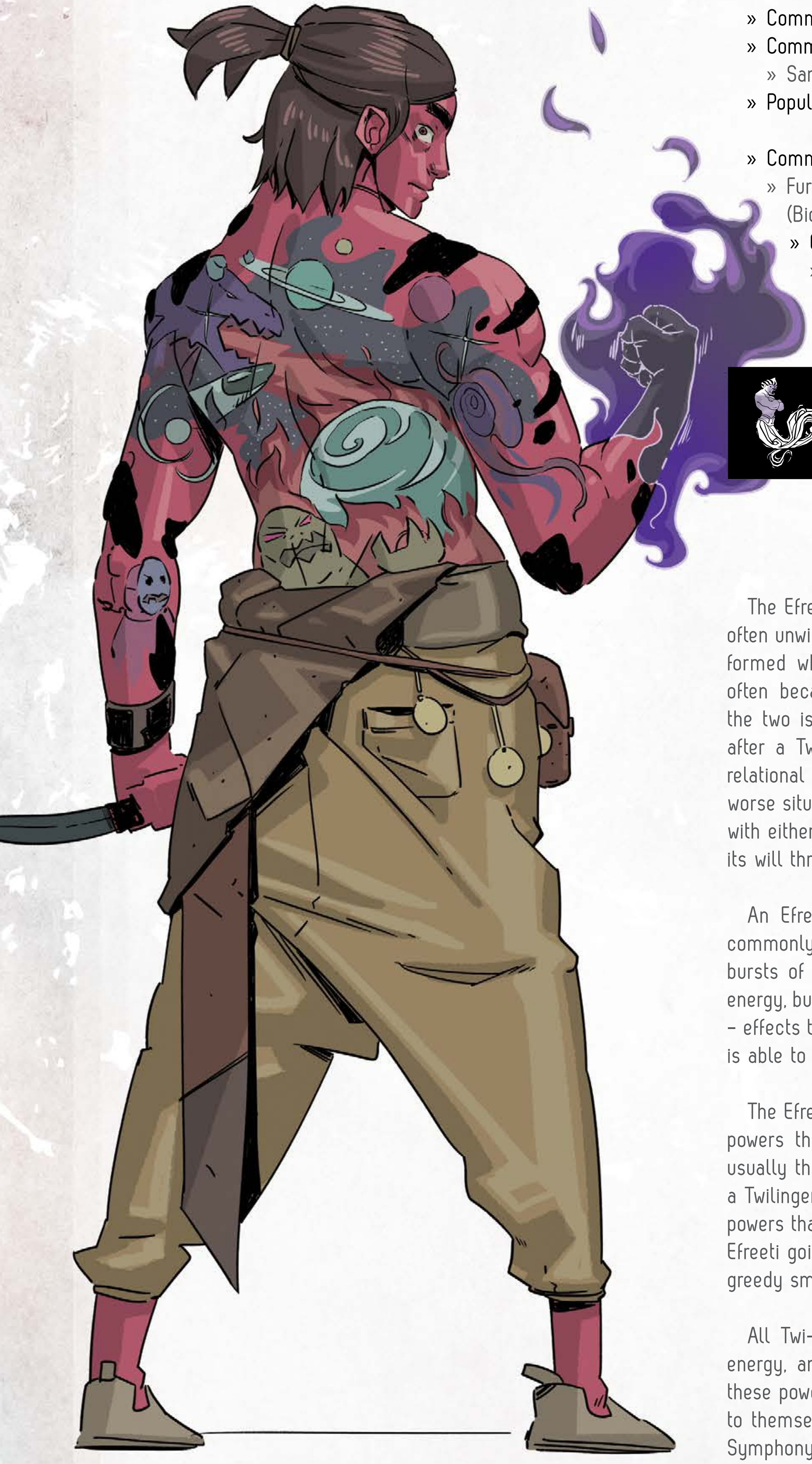
Twi-Far's solar sails allow for long voyages without refuelling and their ship's slight builds give great manoeuvrability. But their long isolation from civilised space has forced their engineers to improvise repairs and upgrades from whatever they could scrounge from abandoned Human and Archon-era ruins. Many parts would be superior to the products of modern manufacturing if they were made to fit together or implemented by engineers who understood their full use. As it stands, Twi-Far engineering requires a bit of artistry to make the disparate parts work in relative harmony.

Technology

Twi-Far mechanics like to make art out of the workings of their machines. While mostly cosmetic, some of these alterations can affect how well such devices function. Some like to weave wiring into complex murals that cover the walls of their engineering decks. Others craft fittings that knock against each other slightly as they turn, playing rhythmic music. Some even go so far as to change fuel compositions and energy modulations to make their engines spit interesting colours. While many engineers would be appalled at these practices, the Faren obviously love them, positively igniting the emotions of their creators and observers.

The highly motivated scientist and explorers of the Twi-Far are also drawn to the beautiful. Preferring to study aesthetically pleasing astronomical phenomena, brightly coloured plants, cute animals and the like.

The Salamander Symphony often have close working relationships with the Phoenix Symphony, as they collect and bring back sensor readings, charts and artefacts for them to study in their laboratories. It is also not uncommon for Phoenix to work alongside them in these research centres. Salamanders also utilise non-spacecraft technology more than any other Symphony, even going so far as to use them to augment or replicate simple Faren powers. Inspired by the Corp, the Salamanders are also exploring the viability of creating their own stock market to improve the efficiency of their economy.



Efreeti Symphony

- **Common Motivations:** Emotional gratification, survival.
- **Common Characteristics:** Dramatic, emotional, erratic, greedy.
- **Common Names & Family Names:**
  - Same as Phoenix Symphony, see pg: 162.
- **Population:** 6.21% of Twi-Far.

- **Common Traits:**
  - Fury/Harness Power (Grit), Impassioned (Resolve), Noxious (Bio-Tech), Melt (Heavy Arms), All Out (Exotic).
  - **Common Equipment:**
    - Faren Companion, Prototype (Faren Blast), Skill/Deflector Field Tactical Suit, ARK Power Coil, Show Off Stance, Resolve/Stealth/Electronics Toolbox.

> "Each Twi-Far is defined by their internal relationship between their two halves, the Twilinger and the Faren. But the Efreeti are what happens when that relationship is broken or abusive. Two halves unaligned."
>
> – Edward Goldworth,
> Are Faren Friend or Foe? Volume IV.

The Efreeti Symphony are made up of those that are unable (and often unwilling) to fit into wider Twi-Far society. They are commonly formed when a Twilinger and a Faren merging does not go well, often because the Faren is too powerful, exotic or when one of the two is harbouring malevolent intent. They can also be formed after a Twi-Far has suffered a traumatic event that damages the relational bond between their Twilinger and Faren halves. In even worse situations their relationship can only be described as abusive; with either the Twilinger or the Faren compelling the other to serve its will through force or manipulation.

An Efreeti's connection to their Faren is often discordant and commonly results in wild eruptions of emotion and power. These bursts of might usually bathe the surrounding area in fiery Faren energy, but at other times they manifest exotic – almost magical-like – effects that push even the Twi-Far's understanding of what a Faren is able to do.

The Efreeti are the most likely of all Twi-Far to have unique Faren powers that will never be seen again. These distinctive gifts are usually the result of a very rare Faren. But the intense emotions of a Twilinger can also twist and change a Faren, forcing it to manifest powers that reflect part of the Twilinger's personality. Such as a shy Efreeti going invisible, bullies growing in muscular strength, and the greedy smelling Corp credits.

All Twi-Far commonly display the ability to create and control energy, and see esoteric visions. Many Efreeti are also limited to these powers, but in an unstable manner that makes them a danger to themselves and their communities. With the help of the Lampad Symphony some Efreeti have been able to heal their inner rifts, but this always results in the loss of any exotic gifts.

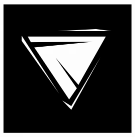
A Discordant Symphony

Unlike the other Symphonies the Efreeti are not bound by a unifying set of principles, only by their unsettled relationship with their Faren and wider Twi-Far culture. While they have a well-earned reputation for selfishness, instability and violence, they also commonly harbour deep internal griefs and pain. Many continue their lives among everyday Twi-Far, while others – pained by never fitting in – seek out others of their kind.

There are multiple small Efreeti groups throughout the region, each with their own culture and unique powers. Many Efreeti also travel alone or with non-Twi-Far, while some groups consist of less than a dozen members.

Fey Light

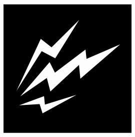
A curious troupe of trickster thieves with Faren that are all sliced-off portions from a single great black creature known as the **Void Caller**. They are unable to perform energy attacks like other Twi-Far, but have the impressive ability to create temporary indistinguishable copies of themselves to distract their foes so that they may rob them. Most Fey Light have parents who were explorers who had encountered the Void Caller in the depths of space while they were pregnant. When it came time for their merging, no Faren apart from the Caller would come near them.



Ifrits

» See Rachel Swagger's Guide to Mishpacha pg: 56 for a full write-up on Ifrits.

An unstable and selfish tribe of tinkerer raiders from the planet Mishpacha. They have incredibly powerful Faren and a tendency to explode when they're angry, which is rather often. Many are escaped slaves that were tortured by Oni who had a special interest in learning to torment their Faren.



Spark Riders

A tiny group of eccentric Efreeti who often live among other Twi-Far and are deathly afraid of Mechonids as they claim to feel their pain. Each Spark's powers are seemingly unique, and they are often created when a Twi-Far's Faren is harmed during the alteration of digital data. Some suspect there are far more Faren harmed in this way than what is publicly known.

Wraith Fists

A band of deadly Efreeti pirates who can make themselves and their spacecraft invisible. It is not fully understood why, but they have chosen to make the dangerous Mechonid-infested gas giant of Ta'lab in the Kasuf system their home. Some suspect they are using an unknown unique feature of the planet to recharge their powers. Their leader is the feared **Luca 'Dread Star' Radiance** and his first mate **Relia 'Death Mask' Skygift**.

The Merging

When a Twilinger reaches puberty and has formed a positive relationship with a wild Faren they will undergo the Merging. Each Merging simulates the circumstances of the very first Merging: The applicant starves themselves of food, consuming large quantities of a mineral that decreases the electrical resistance of their cellular framework until it becomes superconductive. Only then can a Faren enter its host and align its electrical architecture with the host over many painful days. Afterwards, the Twilinger and Faren are forever merged. This pairing is a lifelong physical, psychological and spiritual bond that leaves both parties' personalities and bodies changed.

Very few Twilinger fail to bond with a Faren as wild Faren alongside their fleets are plentiful and eager to form a connection. Those who do not form a friendship with a wild Faren when they are young will be guided by a matchmaker from the Lampad Symphony as they come of age. Twi-Far parents also play a role in what Faren their children bond with, screening them for unwanted characteristics or hints of danger, but as the Efreeti Symphony know better than most, not all Faren are safe, not all Mergings go as planned, and many Faren (and Twilinger) can hide dark intent.

Energy Eaters

Along with their standard biological needs such as food and water, Twi-Far must also consume a moderate amount of energy to sustain their Faren. Energy is thought of as food to the Twi-Far, with recipes for interesting combinations of soothing fire, intense electricity, plain sunlight and the acquired tastes of radiation. Most Twi-Far require little more than four hours of sunlight to sustain their Faren, but can require much more if they have a particularly intense Faren or make use of overtly powerful Faren Powers.

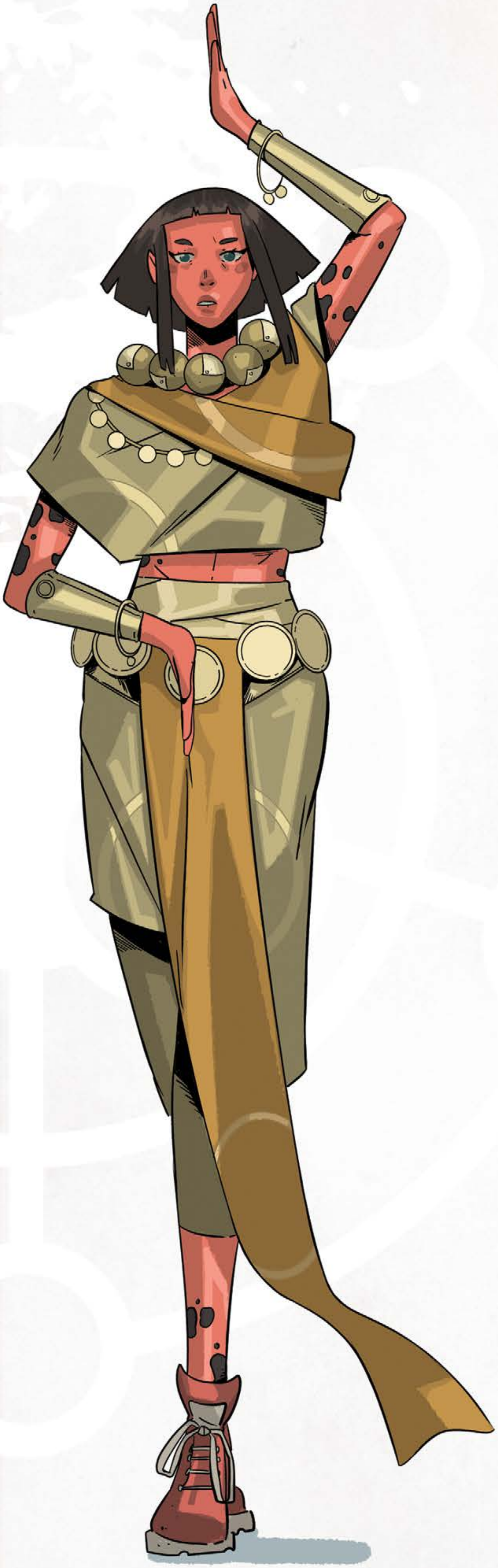
Internal Clock

» See Rachel Swagger's Guide to Mishpacha Pg: 17 for a breakdown of each species approach to time.

All Twi-Far have a perfectly synchronized internal sense of time that flows from their Faren. This spiritual clock ticks forward at a stable rate but with a variable length of year, which the Twi-Far call a Ripple. But stranger than the variable length of each Ripple is that they are counting down from 426 when the first Faren merged with a Twilinger. The current Ripple of 264 has been going on for two Corp-standard years, but Ripple 265 was over in just three months.

Many Twi-Far have mixed feelings about what is to happen when the Ripple date reaches 0. Some are excited but most in the Efreeti Symphony dread its arrival as they sense a great catastrophe will come about. Possibly the return of the X'ion, the death of the last Faren or the arrival of a new threat.

The Twi-Far – including the Efreeti – welcome in each new Ripple with a festival that involves many theatrical performances and handing on of clothes to younger Twi-Far. These Ripple celebrations are also a popular time for young Twi-Far to merge with a Faren.



Seraphim Symphony

- **Common Motivations:** Obedience to the All-Being.
- **Common Characteristics:** Contemplative, dedicated, zealous.
- **Common Names & Family Names:**
  - Same as Phoenix Symphony, see pg: 162.
- **Population:** 2.45% of Twi-Far.

- **Common Traits:**
  - All-Monk (Resources), Meditation (Grit), Inspirational (Leadership), Spirit Guide (Psychology), Higher Mission (Resolve), Restoration (Medicine), Melt (Heavy Arms).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Napalm Gun (Faren Blast), Special (Faren Blast), Skill Tactical Suit, Vortex Field Shield, Culture/Resolve/Medicine Toolbox.

> "Faith in the All-Being is not for the Remnant alone, for his children are not born of blood and flesh, but of spirit. We Seraphim – both Twilinger and Faren – are his adopted children, taken in by his love and grace."
>
> – Anastasia Skyfire,
> Twi-Far All-Monk and Voice of the Blue Nova.

Twi-Far converts to the All-Faith were always rare. Their free-spirited nature and mystical perspective of the Faren did not naturally sit well alongside the structured monotheistic religion of the Remnant. This was until a community of Remnant civilians from the Monasteries of Hope sect sacrificed their lives to save a tiny fleet of Twi-Far from a band of Oni slavers in the Halo Nebula. This unique experience of having strangers sacrifice their lives for others sparked the interests of the Faren within the Twi-Far that witnessed the event.

A small faction of All-Faith Twi-Far grew within several Symphonies and eventually declared themselves to be a new Seraphim Symphony. This newly formed faction is often at odds with the other Twi-Far due to their differing values, and the perceived threat that they pose to Twi-Far norms. They believe the Twi-Far must cease their self-indulgent lifestyles and turn to the All-Being and not the Faren for guidance. They also believe the Twi-Far should put down roots in Haven, grant the Zhou full self-governance, make a firm stand against the Oni and not look down on those Twilinger who do not merge with a Faren.

While the Seraphim do control a number of their own spacecraft – most notably the **Blue Nova** monastery in the Roost fleet – they prefer to mix themselves among the other Symphonies so that they can further the spread of their religion. Seraphim consider Twi-Far to be two people within a single body, and that both Twilinger and Faren are called to place their faith in the All-Being. Controversially, it is usually the Faren who first develops a longing for the All-Being, which nearly always results in the Twilinger following shortly after.

Seraphim have a keen interest in caring for others and often find themselves in medical roles, especially if they are also All-Monks with healing powers. Seraphim leaders encourage all of their members to remain in the vocation that they were in when they first placed their trust in the All-Being. To grow where they were planted.

Blue Nova Monastery

The Blue Nova was once the Dragon Symphonies' greatest warship but has become known as the centre of a movement of peaceful contemplation over the past year. Its reactor core was damaged in a fight with Mechonids and its crew vented into space. The vessel was saved from being scrapped for spare parts by a group of Seraphim Symphony All-Monks who purchased it off the Dragons to be rebuilt as a mobile monastery for those seeking healing or theological education.

The Blue Nova moves with the Roost fleet and has a notable Twi-Far and Remnant population. Its weapons were salvaged by the Dragon Symphony before sale, but donations are currently being collected to install new combat systems. The Voice of the Blue Nova is the All-Monk **Anastasia Skyfire**, a former seventh-rank Balaur warrior of the Dragon Symphony. Anastasia was known for her fiery rage and skill at killing Oni, but now her family say they can barely recognise her due to her calm personality and new Faren powers. Some whisper of her receiving a new Faren, which should be impossible.

Aesthetic & Novelty Needs

Unlike other Twi-Far, those of the Seraphim Symphony do not live lives dedicated to sparking the pleasure of their Faren through new experiences and aesthetic beauty. They do enjoy art and novilty but try their best to not allow it to rule their lives. This is not an easy task, as Faren yearn for wondrous things and spread depression to their partner when they are deprived.

This has prompted the Seraphim to seek to understand the Faren in new ways, to care for their natural needs just as they tend to their own needs for food, shelter and community. Faren not only need to consume energy to live but bonded Faren also need to consume wonder, art and new experiences to remain healthy.

> “We Twi-Far have come far from our roots. Back before the Great War we were nought but industrialist slaves for the Archons. Digging up and processing crystals and ores for their great Xana station. Now we are free-spirited artsy space nomads that can shoot technicoloured beams from our fingers!
>
> But what are we to become? Are we to be warriors to survive the Oni? Or prison guards to protect the universe from the Zhou? Has our great star voyage ended?”
>
> – Yessenia Goldenstar,
> Lampad Symphony truthseeker.

Lampad Symphony

- **Common Motivations:** Care for Faren.
- **Common Characteristics:** Busybody, stuborn, proud.
- **Common Names & Family Names:**
  - Same as Phoenix Symphony, see pg: 162.
- **Population:** 0.13% of Twi-Far.

- **Common Traits:**
  - Old (Strength), Orator (Leadership), Politician (Psychology), Lawyer (Culture), Ultimate Plan (Tactical).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Combat Smarts Special (Faren Blast), Faren Companion, Slick Weave Durable Clothing, Emitter, Vortex Field, Leadership/Psychology/Culture/Medicine Toolbox.

“While we ships through the depths of space, the Lampad matchmakers guide both Twi and Faren souls to each other. Theirs is most prestigious of Symphonies and worthy of much praise.”

– Oberon Stargazer,
Dragon Symphony High Balaur.

They are Faren shepherds, matchmakers and relational guides for the Twi-Far. They are very few in number and live among the other Symphonies to care for nearby gatherings of wild Faren, heal wounded Twi-Far Faren, and aid the Merging of young Twilingers with a suitable Faren partner. Acceptance into this prestigious Symphony is very rare, as it requires a special connection with wild Faren.

Some see them as old busybodies and gossips who are continuously inserting themselves into people's issues and relationships without invitation. While others lavish them with attention and gifts in the hope that they will find their children worthy partners and remain on their ship. A vessel with a resident Lampad will enjoy many social and political perks.

They are particularly praised by the Dragon Symphony who nearly worship them as the ancient stewards of the Twi-Far's most sacred cultural traditions and rights of passage. While the Seraphim Symphony completely dismisses their wisdom.

The Lampad Symphony are reimbursed handsomely for their services by other Twi-Far and will often live very comfortable lives with the finest of material possessions and social influence. Their clothing and chambers are adorned with precious jewels and art, exquisite food is delivered daily to their doors, and they are assumed to be invited to every social function.

Grand Hall

This vessel is the political and cultural heart of the great Roost fleet. A massive vessel fitted with numerous communication relays, deep space buoy launchers and a large auditorium for accommodating Choirs, Chorus' and foreign diplomats. The Grand Hall has no weapons and is considered holy ground by the Twi-Far. It is also the Lampad Symphonies' only ship.

Faren (NPC)

- **Common Motivations**: Unknown.
- **Creator**: Unknown.
- **Population**: Unknown.

- **Common Allies**: Twi-Far.

"Watching flocks of swirling elegant Faren serenely float between the ships of a Twi-Far fleet can lull one into a false sense of safety. Faren are beautiful and calming to observe and have been a common sight for my entire life.

Don't allow their beauty and frequent proximity to put you off your guard. They are incredibly powerful, unable to perceive us or the universe in a way that we can comprehend, and come in varying temperaments and abilities. Most wild Faren who frequent our fleets are reliably safe, but it only takes one wrong move or one new and dangerous wild Faren to cause great harm."

– Sinfi Celestialspring,
observing a swarm of wild Faren.

- See Rule Book pg: 26 for a full write-up on Faren Arcane Rolls.

The Faren are an alien-like species, unlike anything else that has ever been encountered. They are most commonly seen as swirling mists of energy floating around a Twi-Far fleet, dancing and flickering around hulls and engine trails. Despite even the Twi-Far's inability to communicate with them, they do appear to enjoy being around the Twi-Far, exploring space and meeting new species.

Over the decades the Twi-Far have observed the wild Faren, and their antics seem as inscrutable as ever. It is thought that their nature as energy creatures increases their synaptic and sensory speed to extremes that are usually reserved for supercomputers. This would explain their apparent fleeting interest in the activities of corporeal creatures. Ultimately they remain one of the unknowns of the universe, and only the passing generations of Mergings will likely uncover more about their true nature.

True Nature

There are many theories about what the Faren are. Some say they are **transcendent Humans** who have digitized not only their minds (as with the Palantor), but have also created new energy bodies for themselves. They no longer remember themselves as Humans, but their bonding with the Twilinger has given them a faint reminder of what they have lost with incorporeal bodies.

It is possible that the Ley Lines are cracks into **another dimension** and after ten thousand years a few creatures were able to find a way through. What we perceive as a single species is multiple species, some benign while others are deadly.

A few madmen even see them as **true aliens** that can not trace their origins back to the mythical Earth. Possibly from another galaxy.

Note to GMs:

We encourage you to play up the mysterious nature of the Faren, making them into a topic that must be studied by your Players. We have purposefully kept the lore about them vague and avoided details.

In your campaign they could be allies, enemies or an environmental hazard that is an unintentional risk towards your PCs. There could even be different kinds of Faren in the single campaign, which would give a solid reason for the Twi-Far not understanding most of their powers. Below are example Faren to encourage your creativity.

Energy

Faren absorb energy into themselves and are almost invulnerable to physical weapons. But if they absorb too much energy they will explode, and if they suffer too much physical damage they will be split up into multiple creatures.

- -4 End Dmg from Energy Weapons (min 1).
- +1 Armour vs non-Energy Weapons.

- Skilled Faren may gain Bomb (for Energy death) and the Split (for non-Energy death) NPC Variations as a single choice.

Light

Faren only exist within this dimension when they are within bright medium-spectrum light and vanish when in darkness. Focused beams from across the spectrum also alters their nature: high energy (UV, X-ray and gamma rays) makes them slow but multiply, while high wavelength (IR, microwaves, radio waves) make them shrink in size but aggressive.

- While in darkness: +1 Armour, -1 Crit Dmg and may Teleport.
- While in light: -1 Armour, +1 Crit Dmg and you are not Incorporeal.

- Faren vanish when in solid darkness.
- Medium-spectrum: double number of Faren and reduce their Actions by 1 (minimum 1).
- High wavelength: Faren become aggressive.

Unknown

Faren are eldritch horrors that people struggle to fathom. Knowledge allows you to see their true nature, but you also grow in awareness of their terrible power.

- +1 Armour vs characters with less than X Faren-based Kn.
- +4 End Dmg vs characters with X or more Faren-based Kn.

- Characters with 4+ Faren-based Knowledge can see the true Faren: include a new (not using Faren species stats) NPC in all encounters that only they can interact with.

Zhou

- **Creator:** Archons (Divine Circles and Xio factions).
- **Average Height:** 1.55m
- **Average Life Span:**
  - 23 (unlimited with food and growth) years.
- **Population:** 482 thousand (Haven), Unknown (Praid).
- **Principle Settlements:**
  - Mishpacha and its moon Ruach (Haven), Praid (unknown).
- **Government:** Tribal chiefdom.
- **Primary Exports:** Waste disposal.
- **Primary Imports:** Food.

- **Common Allies:** Palantor, Twi-Far.
- **Common Rivals:** Nephilim, Twi-Far.

"We Zhou are all about balance. We must carefully manage our bodies, minds, tribes and environments. Always mindful to not take too much or too little, and to consider the future. For a Zhou without harmony may destroy all."

– Zarnir,
chief of the Amber Bark Pathfinders.

As the Great War raged on the Archons became increasingly desperate, turning to technologies they did not understand and creating weapons they could not control. Among the most devastating of these was the contagion known as Zhou. This black sludge would hunt down and eat all biological matter before starving and consuming itself. Though only used for a few months before the end of the war, it was utilized to great effect on numerous planets and Nephilim fleets.

This cycle of consumption and starvation continued on all worlds that the Zhou were deployed to except for a small idyllic planet known as Praid. The Zhou of Praid survived longer than any other as a large Nephilim brood had attempted to settle there after the departure of the X'ion and fought the Zhou back before they could starve, but not enough to remove the Zhou's control over the planet.

Over decades a massive Uber Zhou on Praid evolved beyond its original design. The Zhou became self-aware and learned that their size was an important component to their nature. The larger a Zhou grew the greater their intelligence but also the greater their hunger. The Uber Zhou not only split itself down into manageable bipedal forms but also divided up into tribes to spread across Praid's many diverse biomes in an effort to avoid starvation. The bioweapon had become a people, learning what they could from the Nephilim, their environment and themselves. They developed a tribal culture along with primitive tools and languages. But their hunger remained; their survival was primarily a battle against their nature. If they could not reach a sustainable equilibrium with themselves and with their planet they would perish.

Praid Zhou are also known for their masks. This was one of their first cultural developments when they broke themselves up into individuals. These masks act as a means of identifying each other and give a focal point during conversation.

Throughout this time the Zhou also learned to construct more advanced bodies for themselves, not just using materials from their environment (which gave each Zhou tribe a unique aesthetic) but to also alter their physiology to give themselves crude organs and a skeletal structure. The Zhou were aware of the Great War, space travel and other advanced technologies. But they had no means of leaving the planet and were prone to eating all organic Nephilim technologies. Most Nephilim Genocrats fled Praid to other worlds, dooming the majority of their abandoned forces to feralhood and giving the planet over to the Zhou.

This process of battling the Nephilim, gaining self-awareness, forming new bodies and spreading their tribes across the planet took the Zhou over a century but has recently been disrupted by the Twi-Far. On their journey out of uncharted space and back to the fallen remains of the Archon empire the Twi-Far encountered Praid and the Zhou. Seeing both great danger and potential in the Zhou, they chose to quarantine the planet and keep its location a well-guarded secret while only allowing a limited number of trusted Zhou to travel with them to the Haven system.

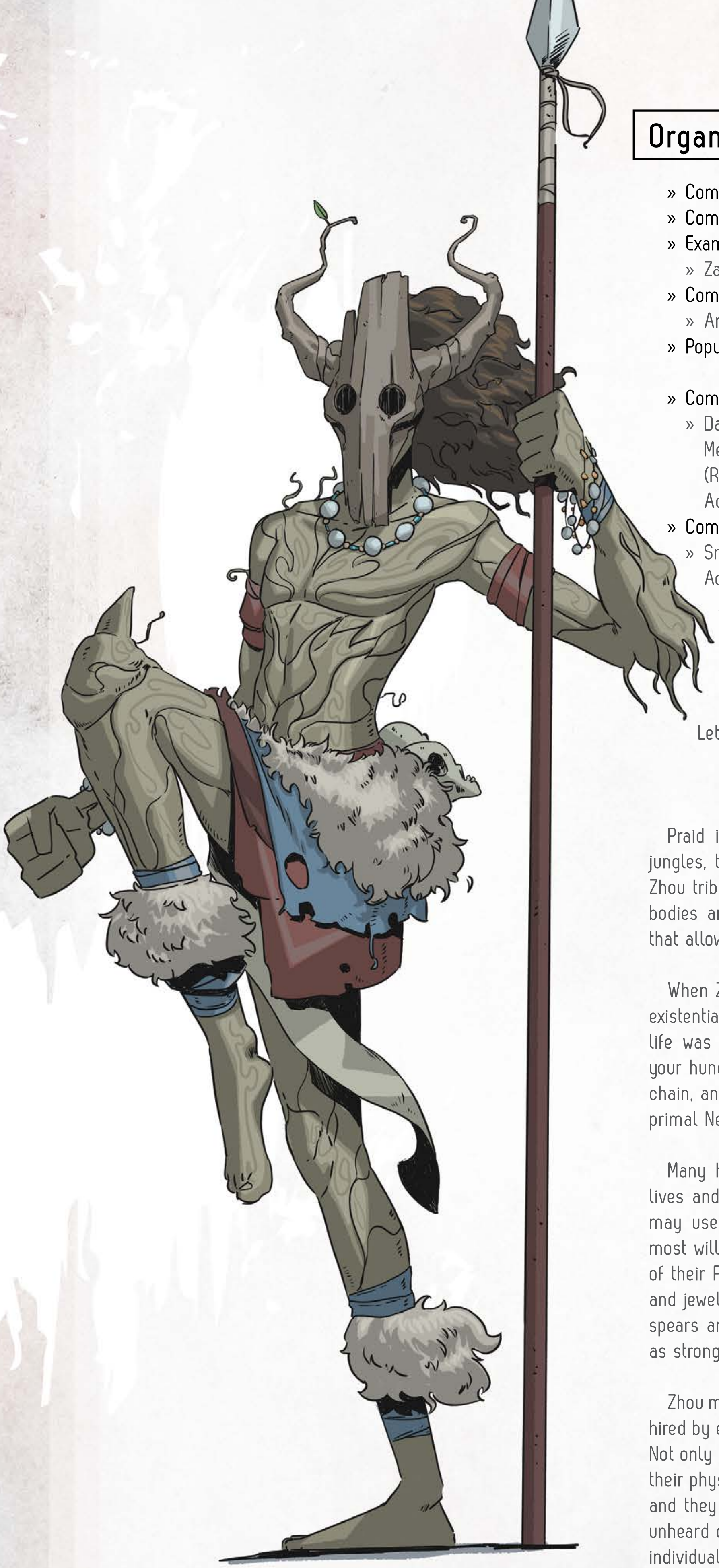
◆ ◆ ◆

The Zhou have a complex relationship with the Twi-Far. They are thankful for their elevation off Praid, but chafe under the power that the Twi-Far have over their species. The Twi-Far are the unofficial rulers of the Zhou, as their governing Choirs and Choruses are in control of all travel from Praid and are seen as responsible for wayward Zhou by the larger Haven community.

Most Zhou have struggled to find a place in their new strange home. They are often mistaken for Nephilim, but are seen by the Eden Brood as a dangerous bio-weapon that was designed to kill them and could destroy a planet. Their ability to serve on spacecraft is limited due to their hunger, and a lack of technical skills often forces them into the darker corners of society to work in waste disposal and cleaning. Many Zhou become disheartened and seek the familiar by joining a Zhou tribe on the jungle world of Mishpacha.

The Palantor are sympathetic to the Zhou, they do not fear them and recognise their great potential to learn and grow. Coupled with the fact that Zhou do not need oxygen and can survive on Palantor space stations and craft that lack life support systems, some Zhou find their way to such Palantor facilities where they embrace modern materials and lifestyles. They are treated well but are dependent on the Palantor for organic food.

While it is true that some Zhou succumb to their great hunger, others are able to raise themselves up to become respected scientist, technicians and warriors. Most notable of the Zhou is the wise great chief Zarnir of the Amber Bark Pathfinder tribe on Mishpacha and the intelligent geneticist Zaqwin of the Silver Mask Pact.



Organics

- **Common Motivations:** Control of hunger, survival.
- **Common Characteristics:** Fierce, instinctual, primal.
- **Example Names:**
  - Zafrog, Zalick, Zilsian, Zogn, Zopo, Zorn, Zupolo, Zwar.
- **Common Tribe Names:**
  - Amber Bark Pathfinders, Grey Bone Marauders.
- **Population:** 71.05% of Haven Zhou.

- **Common Traits:**
  - Dangerous Blood (Strength), Insatiable Hunger (Focus), Meditation (Grit), Regeneration (Physical), Inner Balance (Resolve), Vanish (Stealth), Flora & Fauna (Planets), Adaption (Tactical).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Snare/Acid/Zhou Shell, Infect/Restrain Arcane, Bone/Acid/ Monomolecular Melee, Skill Tactical Suit, Regen Assault Suit, Survival Pack, Serious Face Stance, Stealth/Planets Toolbox.

> "Honour the old ways, for they have guided us true.
> Forsake not the hard-earned lessons of our forebears.
> Let the Uber Zhou's wisdom bring you courage."
>
> – Great chief Zarnir,
> Amber Bark Pathfinder.

Praid is a small but ecologically diverse planet, with deserts, jungles, temperate forests, sweeping plains and deep oceans. Each Zhou tribe on Praid has had to adapt to their ecosystem, fashioning bodies and homes from available resources and creating cultures that allowed them to make the most of their environment.

When Zhou are taken by the Twi-Far to Haven they often have an existential crisis, no longer knowing their purpose or place. On Praid life was familiar: eat to live, fight to guard the tribe, and control your hunger to avoid shame. They were also at the top of the food chain, and only feared the wrath of other Zhou and the occassional primal Nephilim.

Many hold onto their Praid cultures as a way of centring their lives and giving them a firm mental and cultural foundation. They may use modern technologies such as guns and computers, but most will go to great lengths to maintain forms that are a reflection of their Praid origins, such as wood, bone and stone bodies, masks and jewellery. Many will also use traditional Zhou weapons, such as spears and blades made from hardwood and Nephilim bone that is as strong as metal.

Zhou make for excellent terrestrial pathfinders and are occasionally hired by exploration teams and settlers to scout exotic environments. Not only does their cultural upbringing train them for these roles, but their physiology makes them immune to nearly all known pathogens and they do not require oxygen. The Zhou are very few and almost unheard of by most inhabitants of Haven. But a number of insightful individuals are starting to recognize their value.

Twi-Far Wardens

The free-spirited nomadic Twi-Far make for unlikely wardens of the planet Praid and its Zhou inhabitants. They have established a permanent rotation of Dragon Symphony guards in the system and Phoenix Symphony navigators have successfully maintained the secrecy of its location. Twi-Far delegates have contacts within many Zhou tribes and work with their elders to select suitable and willing candidates to bring to Haven. They also train them in the use of computers and teach them the basics of the Corp language.

The Twi-Far steadfastly claim to be acting in the good interests of all people – including the Zhou – but some suspect them of alternative intentions. Such as using Praid as a trap for the Oni. It also can't be ignored that the Zhou increasingly resent the Twi-Far and only maintain friendly relationships so that more of their people may be allowed to leave Praid.

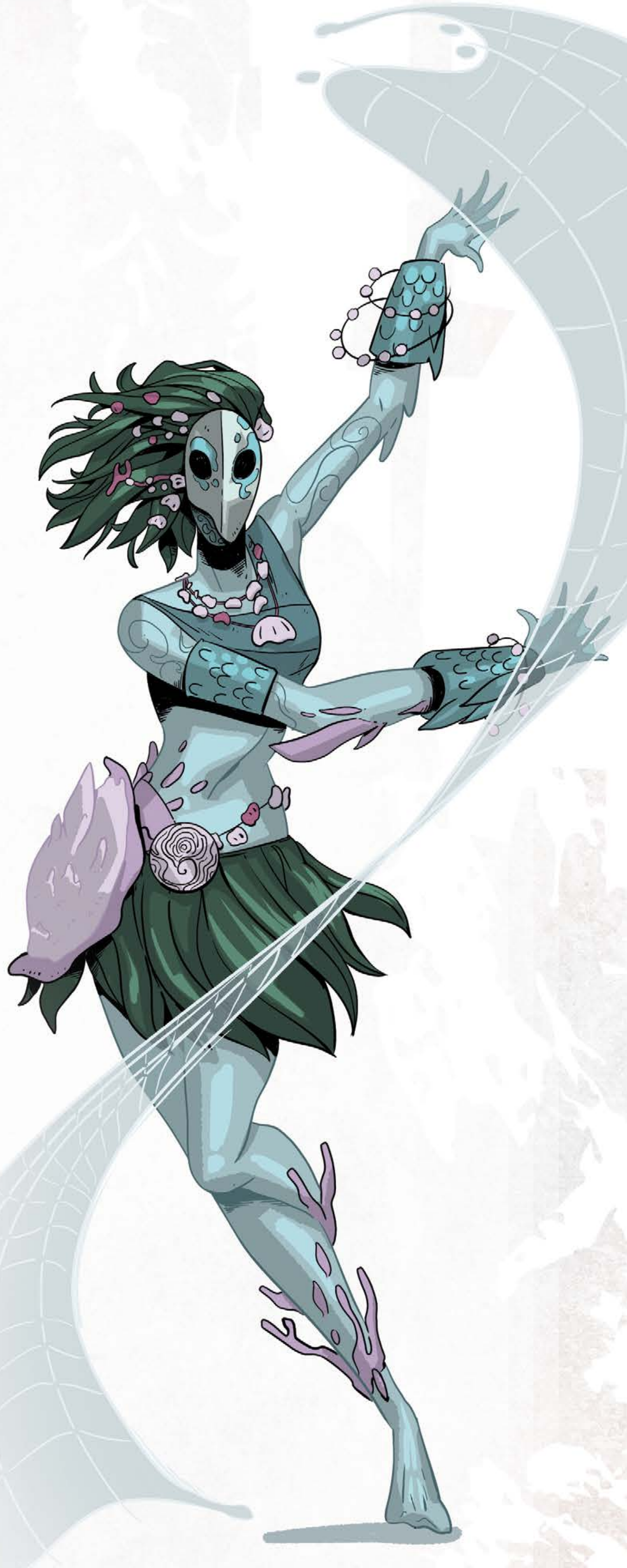
Organs, Size, Intelligence & Hunger

A Zhou literally becomes whatever material they consume, both organic and inorganic. They use organic matter as nutrients to create more Zhou mass (giving their form a similar coloured tinge to what they have consumed), while binding inorganic matter to their bodies to create bones and subdermal protective layers. Without these inorganic components a Zhou would revert to its original blob-like state, losing the many advantages of an upright bipedal form.

The Zhou mass is a morphic sludge-like substance that contains rudimentary sensory, cognitive, muscular and digestive systems that allow it to move about in search of food to create more of itself. A larger Zhou mass will slowly weave portions of itself together to create dedicated organs for specialized use, such as swifter digestion, visual perception and complex thought.

Many talented Zhou have also learned to form portions of their body into complex technical tools, such as sturdy adjustable wrench fingers, complex heart-like organs that can mix dangerous chemicals and sensitive telescopic systems. Chrome Zhou (see pg: 180) are especially known for this as they frequently weave modern technology and batteries into their bodies. The geneticist **Zaqwin** from the Silver Mask Pact has a gene resequencer within her torso, a mixture of Palantor and Nephilim technology that is interwoven with a range of custom Zhou mass organs. Zaqwin hopes to one day bring peace to her people by curing the insatiable Zhou hunger that is hardwired into their genes.

A Zhou may continually add to their mass to gain greater intelligence, strength and more specialized organs, but this will always come with the downside of greater hunger. Zhou must carefully construct their bodies to maximize the use of their Zhou mass, balancing advantages against the risks of losing control over themselves. Zhou who lose control and indulge in their hunger are hunted down by other Zhou and burned. Zhou are immune to nearly all known chemical substances and dangerous environments except for heat.



The many Tribes of Praid

The Zhou tribes of Praid tend to have no more than a few hundred members, and their dwellings and equipment would be considered primitive by most. This outward simplicity can be misleading, as the majority of their advancement over the past century has been focused around their morphic bodies. For them, survival is almost entirely about creating a harmonious balance within themselves and with their environment.

Arctic

The Zhou of the frozen poles have clawed limbs, are of small stature, and they hunt the oceans and snow plains for food. Materials are scarce, but the cold slows their ageing and allows them to live relatively long lives for a Zhou.

They are also renowned for their ability to accurately throw a spear over long distances. This is in part due to the three eye-like organs in the centre of their face. Arctic Zhou are considered eccentric, even by other Zhou.

Desert

Food is rare and the heat a killer for desert-dwelling Zhou. Their bodies are formed almost entirely of stone, which makes them slow but incredibly durable. They have difficult lives and are forced to maintain small populations. Their cave homes are deep, cold and often built around an underground water source. Most of their food is captured through traps, ambushes or dug out of the earth.

Stone Zhou have no skeletal structure or epidermal protective layers and have multiple slow-digestive stomachs. They are almost entirely made up of muscle, which allows them to heave around their massive bodies. Their stone forms are often carved with intricate designs over multiple generations; depicting both great events and great catastrophes.

Some exotic desert Zhou have gone so far as to completely discard their bipedal forms and have become fast-moving sludge-like creatures that are covered in sand. These are known as **Wind Demons**, and they are cautious of outsiders.

Forest & Jungle

The Zhou of the forests and jungles have abundant food supplies and tend to be cunning hunters and diligent gatherers. Their bodies have long limbs that are ideal for bursts of speed, climbing and throwing spears. Their bones are often made of flexible hardwood, while their tools make use of a mixture of Nephilim bones and carapace.

Tree-based Zhou tend to have very complex and finely tuned societies with multiple levels of governance and intricate family structures. Their regular contact with the Twi-Far has also resulted in several of their tribes gaining the use of computers, solar arrays, motors and even firearms. This, along with basic Twi-Far schooling, has helped to prepare many of them for their journey to Haven.

Grassland

The Zhou of the rolling hills and grasslands are often non-bipedal, having crafting quadruped-forms for themselves so that they may hunt down prey and travel to the edge of their vast lands for trade. Most tribes have multiple different Zhou forms, with bipeds traversing difficult terrain and making use of tools while their four-legged counterparts act as scouts, hunters and even mounts.

But more surprising to the Twi-Far is that a few grassland tribes are agrarian and have large crops of grain and small herds of pig-like feral Nephilim. These advancements in food production mixed with semi-regular trade with other tribes have allowed for larger Zhou populations and encouraged the creation of complex tools. To the astonishment of the Legion, many Haven Zhou with grassland origins also know of large Cerberus Hound-like canines on Praid. Though they are hunted for food and are not trained as companions.

Ocean

Deep sea Zhou have easy access to food but struggle with materials. Their web-fingered bodies are often small and flexible with a light skeletal structure. They make use of ocean currents to travel far so that they may trade with a wide range of tribes, bartering with rare materials and information from distant lands.

They have the most complex language of all the tribes, but it can only be understood while underwater and makes use of custom-made organs. They also tend to know multiple Zhou languages due to their many trading partners.

Subterranean

When the Nephilim landed on Praid they grew vast underground nests that stretched across continents and burrowed deep into the planet's crust. The great Uber Zhou consumed most of these nests but left behind Zhou individuals to make their homes there.

Little is known about these deep-dwelling Zhou as few have made contact with the Twi-Far. They are brutal warriors that are constantly battling with feral Nephilim who are innately trying to claim back their homes. There are even reports of these cave Zhou incorporating Nephilim-inspired spine guns into their bodies that are the rival of any modern firearm.

Complex & Grand Ceremonies

While some venerate the **Uber Zhou** in a god-like fashion, most have expressed no interest in religion (though some have since converted to the All-Faith and taken up Kaltoran-like meditation) but have long placed great value on elaborate ceremonies, etiquette and daily routines as a means of reinforcing hard-learned lessons about balance and connection. Every day of a traditional Zhou's life contains a string of short ceremonial practices, from exercising their limbs to ensure stable construction, singing to massage their throats and greeting each other with elaborate hand gestures to convey dependence, thankfulness, trust and accountability.

Key events such as the meeting of tribal elders, the creation of new Zhou individuals, a great battle against feral Nephilim or the burning of a giant hunger-mad Zhou are all done with grandiose visual pomp, music, dance, gift-giving and elaborate meals. These ceremonies can go for days at a time, and are often seen as highlights that give life meaning and value.

For a Zhou to interrupt a celebration is often to invite death, as those who discard tradition and the cares of others are viewed as dangerous. Disruptive non-Zhou are rarely attacked but will be quickly ushered out of a community.

How the Zhou developed these traditions is a matter of much debate among anthropological communities as the Praid Zhou had no exposure to cultures outside of the Nephilim. The most popular hypothesis is that the first great Uber Zhou mass that voluntarily split itself up to create all current Zhou from Praid was immensely intelligent and developed thousands of years worth of cultural, philosophical and ecological ideas within its very short sentient life. When the Uber Zhou split to create other Zhou it passed on thoughts that would lead to the formation of the current Zhou cultures.

Zhou outside of Praid continue many of these ceremonies, but with diminished complexity if they live outside of a traditionalist Zhou community. They are also welcoming to non-Zhou, and encourage all to participate in their celebrations. On more than one occasion a squad of Legion mercs and Kaltoran bounty hunters have found themselves unexpectedly swept up in a week-long party of feasting after the killing of a great Mechonid or feral Nephilim beast that was threatening a Zhou village on Mishpacha.

Language: Zhou

The ancient Zhou listened to the language used by their Nephilim enemies and the sounds of the wilderness – animals, streams, and the wind – and replicated them to confer meaning. However, the early Zhou did not communicate as the other species; as they did not give themselves vocal tracts. Which led the Zhou to produce a language that is made up of clacking and grinding together of internal and external bits of absorbed material. Modern Zhou have learned to give themselves vocal tracts, and make use of a more traditional Junk Neph or Corp language to communicate complex ideas.

There is an almost uncountable number of traditional Zhou dialects, stemming from both the varied materials making up the Zhou and from the many Zhou tribes, each with their own inflections and sounds. The Zhou have few formal written languages, though most tribes use hieroglyphs and painted images to create visual messages.

Technology

While on Praid the Zhou knew of advanced technology through the Nephilim and from the Great war, it wasn't until the arrival of the Twi-Far and their introduction to the Haven system that they gained an appreciation of modern skills and equipment. Unfortunately, an average-sized Zhou is not the most intelligent of people, but they are fast adapters and are able to make use of dangerous equipment that others are cautious of using.

"They have no infrastructure, technology, wealth or noteworthy skills beyond waste disposal. Come back to me if you ever discover their value."

– Roland Bradford,
Corporate CEO of Bradford Investment.

"They're a tricky people. Some of them are loads of fun while others are monsters. Just avoid drinking contests, don't go on long space trips without cryo-pods or extra food, shoot the big ones on sight and don't let them settle their villages near ya farms."

– Bethany Strike,
Kaltoran Pioneer.

"They are nothing more than a cunning contagion that has learned to use social manipulation to spread themselves among the other species. We will not so easily be fooled.

– Krizacklor,
Nephilim CEO of FLESH Inc.

"Are you telling me those funny little slime creatures with the masks are not only not Nephilim but actually fought on our side of the war against the Neph?"

– Eurydike Drake,
Legion Auxilia merc.

"I am rarely impressed by the achievements of the Archons, but these Zhou are truly remarkable and would be the masters of the galaxy if it were not for their cursed hunger. They can live in most environs, may reshape their physical forms, create new organs for themselves, extract nutrition from most organic matter, pass on their minds to the next generation, and have great adaptive brains that are decentralized throughout their bodies... all of this is hamstrung by their hardwired hunger that dooms them to insignificance."

– Kaori_102,
Palantor scientist.

"They are a humble people who know what it is to fight one's inner turmoil. I have much respect for these seeking souls."

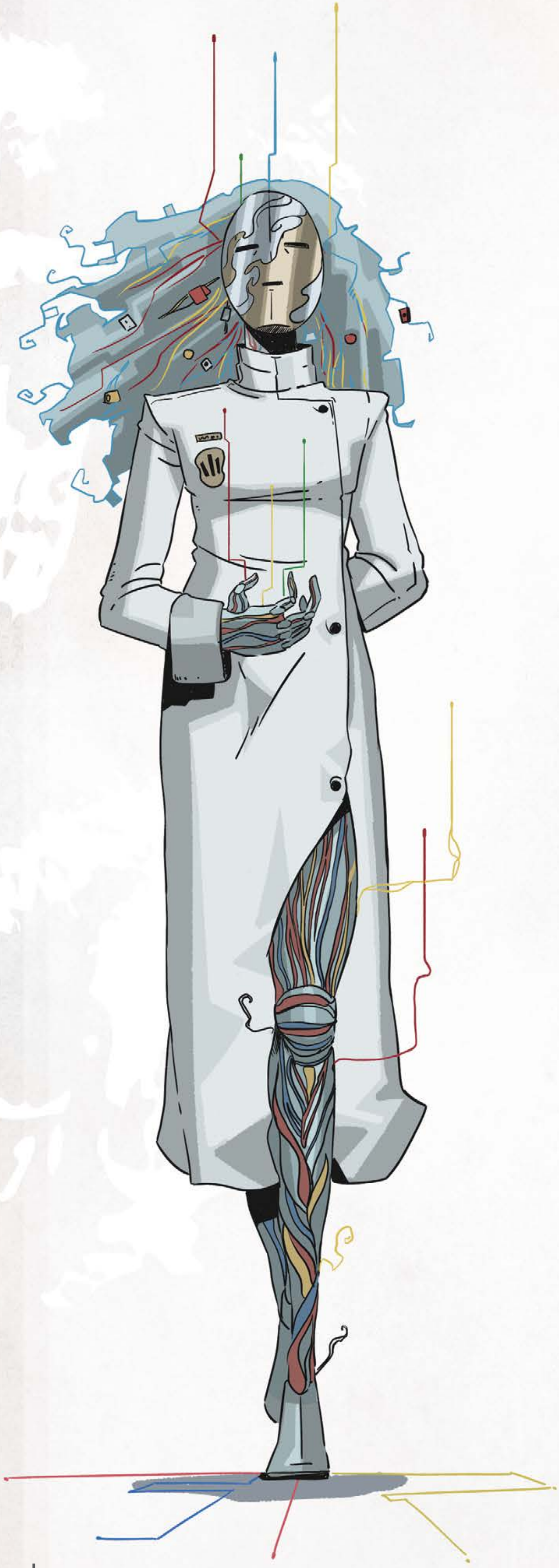
– Rudo Kudenga,
Remnant All-Missionary.

"We respect their pursuit of harmony within themselves and nature. Only time will tell if we have blessed the galaxy with another Faren-like gift or cursed it with another Oni-like threat."

– Cinka Starwave,
Twi-Far Dragon Symphony warrior.

"This is a dangerous Age for our people. We sit on the edge of a great fire that is ready to destroy us if we fail to adapt. We are consumed by the need to control our great hunger, which is constantly distracting, hampering and threatening us with destruction by Nephilim or Twi-Far cage."

– Zeeelino,
Zhou Silver Mask Pact



Chromes

- **Common Motivations:** Control of hunger, social acceptance.
- **Common Characteristics:** Calm, cunning, thoughtful.
- **Common Names:** Same as Organics, see pg: 176.
- **Common Tribe Names:** Silver Mask Pact, White Tide Traders.
- **Population:** 6.82% of Haven Zhou.

- **Common Traits:**
  - Self Control (Focus), Educated (Intelligence), Philosopher (Psychology), Structured Life (Culture), Tinkerer (Electronics), Bio-Phage/Bio-Mechanics (Bio-Tech), Virulent (Exotic).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Particle/Ion Gun, Shrapnel Shell, Tactical Computer Arcane, Functional/Force Field Tactical Suit, Med Spray, Strategic Stance, Mechanics/Electronics/Computers/Bio-Tech Toolbox.

"Just as our ancestors adapted to their distinctive biomes on Praid, so too must we adapt to this new technological environment. Let our bodies be of wire, our skeletons of Synth Steel, our forms inlaid with computers and our masks be of polished chrome."

- Zooblyn,
Silver Mask Pact.

Those Zhou who have distanced themselves from traditional body materials and made forms of modern components are known as Chromes – a term that was coined by the Palantor who house many such Zhou at their facility on Setzer's Comet. These Chromes tend to have a denser Zhou mass that is layered around bodies of plastic, wire, metal and inlaid with technology. Their denser Zhou mass has the same effect as being a larger Zhou (more intelligent and hungrier) but is balanced out by being a lower percentage of their overall body. A few wealthy Zhou have even paid to have custom components manufactured for their forms, but most Chromes must make do with what they can scavenge from tips and junkyards. It is not uncommon for Chromes living outside of Setzer's Comet to be mistaken for a robot made from junkyard parts, or a weird kind of rubish-eating Nephilim.

Despite most Chromes only living off Praid for a few years they tend to be modern in their thinking, fluent in the common Corp language and very capable with technology. They once again show that all Zhou have a remarkable ability to adapt both their minds and their bodies to a completely new way of life if they need to.

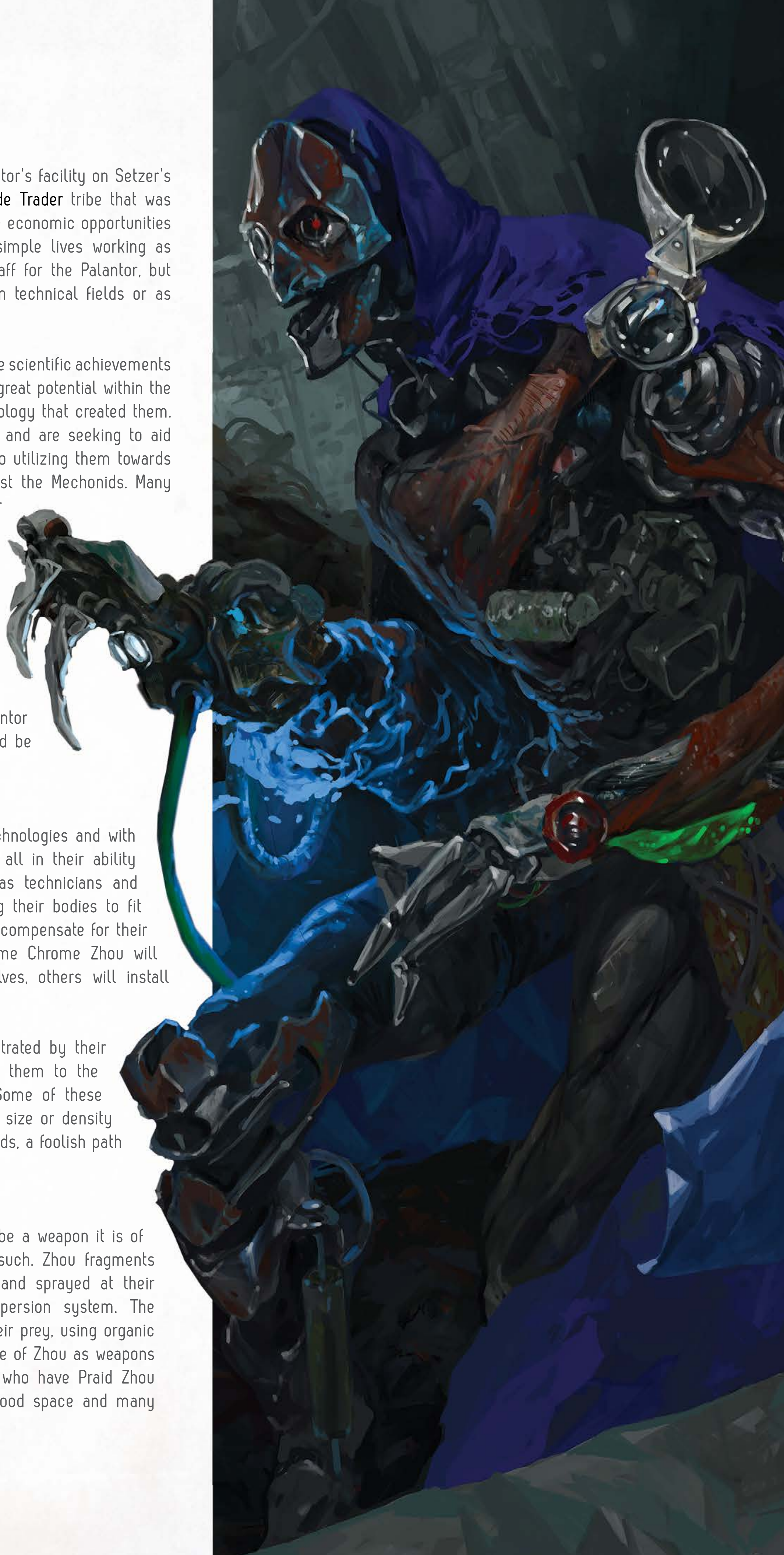
Palantor Partnership

Of all the species in and around Haven, the Palantor have formed the closest bond with the Zhou. The Remnant may give them charitable aid, some Kaltorans may see them as friends, and the Twi-Far may be moving them out of Praid, but their shared ability with the Palantor to live without life support systems and the Palantors lack of fear of the Zhou as an organic weapon has opened up many doors for cooperation. The two species are outsiders, too few in number to have any political or cultural weight within Haven, but both making use of advanced technology that is beyond the other species.

Numerous Chrome Zhou live on the Palantor's facility on Setzer's Comet, especially those from the **White Tide Trader** tribe that was created by the Palantor to locate and create economic opportunities for their Omos. Most of these Zhou live simple lives working as guards, labourers, cleaners and support staff for the Palantor, but a few have elevated themselves to work in technical fields or as skilled warriors.

The Palantor are largely unimpressed by the scientific achievements of the Archons and the X'ion, but they see great potential within the Zhou and are truly impressed by the technology that created them. While the Palantor do appreciate the Zhou and are seeking to aid them, they are unable to do so without also utilizing them towards their own ends; namely in their war against the Mechonids. Many brave Zhou have died alongside the Palantor in their conflict, but unlike the Palantor they are not potentially immortal.

If the Zhou and Palantor are to create a lasting bond they will need to learn to relate beyond their current crises. As it is not known if their connection will last if the Zhou cure their hunger or are able to provide for themselves and if the Palantor finally defeat the Mechonids. But this could be said for all of the species of Haven.



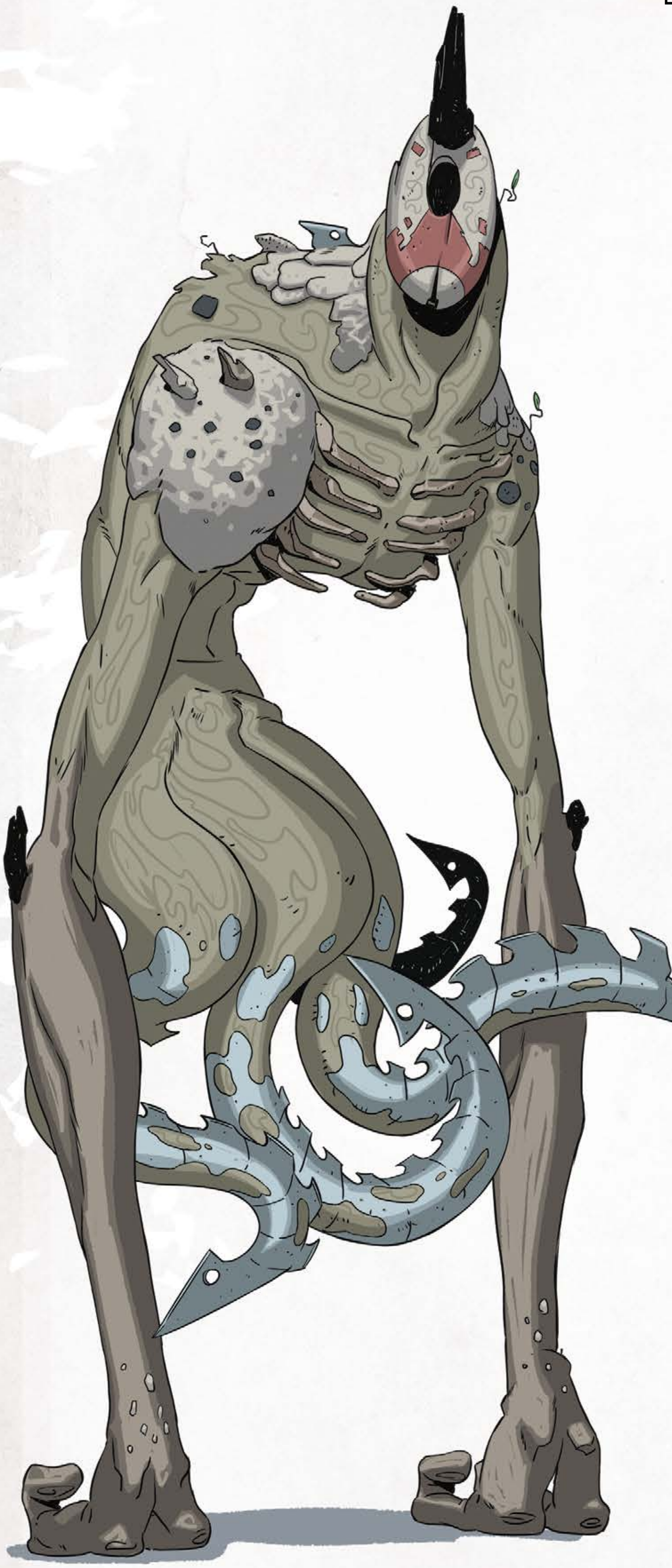
Technology

Chrome Zhou are quick to adopt new technologies and with the aid of the Palantor they are equal to all in their ability to do so. Numerous Chrome Zhou work as technicians and as lab assistants in various fields, altering their bodies to fit their chosen profession and as a means to compensate for their default lack of cognitive power. While some Chrome Zhou will create neural network organs for themselves, others will install computers directly into their forms.

Some ambitious Zhou are regularly frustrated by their self-imposed mental limitations that limit them to the scientific shadows of the other species. Some of these Zhou will take the route of increasing their size or density as a means of secretly enhancing their minds, a foolish path that always ends in disaster.

Zhou Launcher (Weapon)

As the Zhou contagion was designed to be a weapon it is of little surprise that some use them as such. Zhou fragments are stored within a shielded container and sprayed at their target through a simple chemical dispersion system. The Zhou fragments will then eat away at their prey, using organic material to reproduce themselves. The use of Zhou as weapons in this way are frowned upon by those who have Praid Zhou friends and is illegal within all Eden Brood space and many high population cities.



Wilders

- **Common Motivations:** Control of hunger, freedom.
- **Common Characteristics:** Cunning, fierce, instinctual, primal.
- **Common Names:** Same as Organics, see pg: 176.
- **Common Tribe Names:** Grey Bone Marauders, White Tide Traders.
- **Population:** 12.13% of Haven Zhou.

- **Common Traits:**
  - Exotic Anatomy (Strength), Extra Limbs (Reflexes), Insatiable Hunger (Focus), Intimidating (Leadership), Bio-Phage (Bio-Tech), Drain (Tactical), Martial Power (Exotic).
- **Common Equipment:**
  - Snare/Acid/Zhou Shell, Infect/Restrain Arcane, Bone/Acid/Melee, Skill Tactical Suit, Regen/Ablative Assault Suit, Survival Pack, Aggressive Stance, Stealth/Planets Toolbox.

"To reach our highest potential we must learn to be Zhou, not cheap imitations of the other species."

– Chief Zoolacki,
Grey Bone Marauders.

Those Zhou who have left Praid to enter wider society are under constant pressure to conform and adjust to the expectations and cultural requirements of the other species. This is a task that is aided by their innate adaptability but hampered by their dangerous nature. Some Zhou chafe against this conformist life where they are required to minimise personal attention so as not to appear threatening, and they resent the Twi-Far for the control that they have over their people. These Zhou hate that so many of them are forced to live on Mishpacha in primitive Praid-like ways, as impoverished janitors for the Corp or as lackeys for the Palantor. They want self-determination to plot their own path through life and to not be forced to limit themselves to bipedal bodies for the sake of social conformity.

Such Zhou are often on the fringes of society and are tempted to become the monsters that others fear that they are. While some do move down this dark path, others are just trying to change what is considered socially acceptable for a Zhou and to reach their full potential as a species.

These non-conformist Zhou are called Wilders and are known for their exotic bodies. Some have monstrous forms, multiple limbs, elongated necks, tails, protruding bones, no heads and mix large amounts of inorganic material into their bodies. While these Wilders are often frightening in appearance they are careful to adhere to two important rules: have a mask and maintain an average Zhou mass that avoids both stupidity and ravenous hunger.

Many of these Wilder Zhou dislike the forest tribes of Praid as they are seen as the most conformist of their people. They are unwilling to push the limits of their bodies beyond the bipedal, regularly work with the Twi-far to select 'safe' candidates to leave for Haven and are quick to adopt technological solutions to their problems. Most Wilders trace their ancestory to the grassland tribes.

> “I suspect there is more X’ion genetics in us than we would like to admit.”
>
> – Zaqwin,
> Chief of the Silver Mask Pact.

Poverty

A harsh reality for many Zhou is that they are unable to find a place for themselves outside of Praid. They have a small population and are an undervalued people that many see as dangerous and unemployable. Many Zhou live in poverty, working as janitors and in waste disposal in the bowls of Corp space stations, etching out a meagre life among the sewage and trash of the Kaltorans or as beggers among the Remnant. Some are even hunted down in secret by the Eden Brood to be killed.

Zhou without attachment to a powerful supporter – such as the Palantor or a tribe – have no legal or political recourse against their economic mistreatment or for crimes perpetrated against them. They suffer in obscurity and must learn to present themselves as non-threatening and as useful as possible if they are to survive.

These pressures push many Zhou to live among the jungle tribes of Mishpacha, but some are unable to make the journey or do not wish to rebuild their bodies with traditional materials. Others try to make their way to Setzer’s Comet, but this requires submission to the Palantor. A sad truth is that many Zhou are forced to craft bodies for themselves from rubbish, and are just trying to etch out a simple life in an uncaring universe. Most deal with this by attempting to fit in and trying not to stand out, but some manage by rebelling against the rules of a society that has no place for them.

A Mask for All

The first great Zhou mass on Praid has come to be known as the **Uber Zhou** and was the first of their species to adopt the use of a mask as a symbolic declaration of sentience, personhood and as a social focal point during communication. The concept of wearing a mask is so pervasive and ingrained within Praid Zhou that all who can trace their lineage back to the Uber Zhou wear one; no matter their tribe, if they are a hunger-mad giant or a small Zhou with little more intelligence than an animal.

These masks are traditionally made of wood or Nephilim bone, but modern variants have been known to be made of metal and plastic. The design of these masks varies between tribes, with some being sculpted by their parent before they are born, while others are crafted after their first great hunt.

Wilder Zhou wholeheartedly embrace the use of masks as they are a distinctive pure-Zhou cultural feature that were not implemented for the benefit of non-Zhou. A Zhou’s mask is their face, and as much a part of their body as any limb or organ.

Short Lives & Reproductive Split

As a Zhou comes toward the end of their relatively short life of twenty years, their mind will dull and their body will begin to harden. During this time they will choose to isolate themselves and gorge on nutrient-rich food to build bulk and clear their thoughts. The Zhou will then split in two, creating a pair of new distinct individuals. Neither of these newborn twin Zhou is the being that it once was, losing much of its memories, personality and returning to a childlike state for around a year while it rebuilds its organs using innate knowledge from its parent.

The short lifespan of the Zhou has greatly aided their species survival, giving them more iterations to adapt to their environment and fine-tune their bodies. A peaceful woodland Zhou tribe can completely shift to a brutal warrior subterranean tribe within just two generations.

Zhou are a mono-gendered species, but they will regularly assume gendered cultural distinctiveness as a means of conforming to the species in and around Haven. The unconscious nature of this adaption lends weight to the theory that Zhou are not only organically adaptive but also subconsciously mentally adaptive, gaining properties that best allow them to fit into their current situation. While culturally conforming Chromes lean into these social norms, Wilder Zhou pull away from them and prefer to be seen as non-gendered.

On occasion a Zhou will refuse to split and are forced to consume more and more food to maintain their mind and body until they turn into a rampaging monster. When such a beast emerges other Zhou will hunt it down and burn its body, lest it threaten their ecosystems. Zhou who are given this task are known as **Charring Hunters**, and are among the rare Zhou who train with weapons of fire and heat.

Cunning Contagion

The Eden Brood Nephilim’s primary accusation against the Zhou is that they are using social manipulation to spread themselves so that they may cause maximum harm when they eventually turn against all organic life. They have created personalities and bodies for themselves that make them appear weak and non-threatening as a means of lulling the various species into a false sense of security. If this is true, then it is something that not even the Zhou are consciously aware of, and must have been implanted into them by the Uber Zhou. If the Eden Brood did not anticipate a political backlash they would kill all Zhou.

Technology

Wilder Zhou have a general preference for using their own bodies as a weapon. Clawed hands for slashing, rock heads for charging, spiked tails for stabbing, barb-launching chest cavities and even throwing portions of themselves at their foes are all among the norm for a Wilder. These Zhou are not opposed to the use of technology or traditional Zhou weapons but have a simple preference for maximizing the potential of their Zhou forms and exploiting the presumptions of their opponents.

Haven Tribes

There are countless Zhou tribes on Praid, each one defined by their environment. The following tribes are the largest in and around Haven and are primarily shaped by their ideologies.

Amber Bark Pathfinders

» See Rachel Swagger's Guide to Mishpacha pg: 45-46 for a full write-up of the Zhou on Mishpacha.

Led by the wise great chief **Zarnir**, the Amber Bark are the largest Zhou tribe in the Haven system and have made a home for themselves on the planet Mishpacha alongside five other smaller Zhou tribes and two Kaltoran settlements. The Amber Bark are known for their traditionalist values and their veneration of Zhou who show control over their hunger. They believe Zhou should live in the wilds, eschew modern technologies and guide the other species towards a more harmonious lifestyle.

Chief Zarnir is an old Zhou at the age of twenty-one and is expected to split within the next few years. He rules alongside a council of lesser chiefs and is known for lending a helping hand to wayward Zhou who have not yet eaten another sentient creature. Zarnir grew up in a forest tribe on Praid that was destroyed by a large hunger-mad Zhou before being taken by the Twi-Far to Haven to briefly work as a scout for Corp colonists on Mishpacha. Saddened by how many Zhou who were losing their way, he gained control of a tiny displaced Zhou tribe on Mishpacha and grew its numbers through the adoption of Zhou who wanted to return to a Praid-like lifestyle.

Many troubled Zhou have found themselves spending some time among the Amber Bark Pathfinders to regain control over themselves and to clarify their life direction. The tribe welcomes and cares for them as best as they can, even though most are only temporary residents and will return to their former lives.

Those who have spent time with the Amber Bark Pathfinders will often return with a hand-crafted wood and Nephilim-bone spear, or a carved white beaded necklace. Such items are respected by most Zhou as they are seen as symbols of a healthy mind and an authentic wildland education. These important items must be earned, and are not given out to all Zhou who visit the Amber Bark tribe.

> "The Zhou will never be allowed to flourish in Haven. If there ever comes a time when they are about to gain any notable power the other species - bar we Palantor - will turn on them.
>
> They are on a doomsday clock against themselves. They must fix their hunger before they gain numbers, wealth or any form of notable cultural attention."
>
> \- Vaachasya_080
> Prophetic omo of House Toad.

Grey Bone Marauders

Created from a single massive Zhou stowaway named **Zid** who devoured a Twi-Far crew and their Zhou passengers before commandeering their ship. Zid would go on to form the Grey Bones, a large tribe of brutal Wilder Zhou that wish to see their people liberated from the Twi-Far at any cost.

Zid was a quadruped outcast from a grassland hill tribe on Praid. After killing the crew and passengers on its ship it was hunted down by a team of Dragon Symphony Twi-Far and Charring Hunter Zhou. Zid was killed in a deep space gunfight and most of its remains were scattered to the void. Samples of its body were taken to a Salamander Symphony science vessel for study, but they were liberated by double agents who were secretly working for the Eden Brood Nephilim.

The remains of Zid were handed over to the Grey Bone Marauders and incorporated into the bodies of two of their chiefs: the anti-Twi-Far terrorist **Zoolacki** and the pirate **Za**.

Zoolacki is a ravenous monster who is thought to operate out of a base in the star systems LaX-21 or Zi-3. Its agents prefer to disguise themselves as Nephilim or green spark Palantor labourers in want of a job on a spacecraft. Once they have employment they will work their way towards securing trade or merc contracts with the Twi-Far so that they may spy on them and sabotage their ventures.

Za has loose ties to the Bloodied Hand pirates from the Kasuf system and is rumoured to have numerous secret caches of money and supplies stored up for when the Zhou are forced to rebel against the Twi-Far. Za is an expert warrior that grew up in a Subterranean tribe on Praid, and has powerful spine launching guns built into two of his three limbs.

Both Zoolacki and Za are being secretly aided by the Eden Brood Nephilim through proxies so that the tribe may be used to discover the location of Praid and to foster political hostilities towards the Zhou. This fact is known by the great chief Zarnir from the Amber Bark Pathfinder tribe, whom the Grey Bone Marauders hate and would never believe.

Grey Bone Marauders are especially talented at creating unique organs for themselves, a gifted that was passed down through their founder Zid. The most impressive of these are the cognitive enhancement nodes (CEN) which act as brain-like organs that allow medium-sized Zhou to process information at an accelerated speed. They are even experimenting with the formation of Zhou that are 90% CEN organ that can process large amounts of tactical data without the clouding of uncontrollable hunger.

Silver Mask Pact

Formed from the union of many smaller tribes, the Silver Masks are among the most willing Zhou to adapt to new cultures and technologies. Their Chrome leader **Zaqwin** is a talented geneticist who wishes to cure the Zhou of their hunger and is responsible for developing techniques that have led to the creation of many augmentations that can be merged into a Zhou's body. The Silver Masks are particularly despised by Wilders – and especially the Grey Bone Marauders – as they seek to integrate Zhou into the cultures of the other species through placation and assimilation.

Zaqwin is a young Zhou that was born from a Chrome parent on Setzer's Comet and has never seen Praid or experienced a body without modern materials. While her twin brother **Zortwin** became a combat medic for a mercenary outfit, Zaqwin has always had a keen interest in research.

She quickly gained attention in many scientific communities for her work on body augmentations and hunger-suppressive food. At the age of three several prominent Palantor Omos and Twi-Far Voices funded the creation of a laboratory on Mishpacha, which was followed by a Corp C.U.R.E-funded laboratory on Alabaster Two, and then a string of self-funded facilities across the Haven system. Some are not sure if the word 'company' might not be a better fit than 'tribe' to describe these early years of the Silver Mask Pact.

But much of this changed after the murder of Zortwin in a back alley by a starving homeless Zhou looking for cash. The sheltered Zaqwin suddenly became aware of just how broken her people were, and how she had lived a life of relative privilege for a Zhou. In less than a year she had repurposed most of her facilities and warehouses to be more than just scientific laboratories, but to also house homeless Zhou and provide cheap food for anyone in need.

The Silver Mask Pact gain most of its funding through research contracts for the questionable C.U.R.E mega-corporation. A large portion of these finances go towards her laboratories and homeless shelters but are increasingly being funnelled to mercenary teams to hunt down and harvest organs from ravenous Zhou.

Zaqwin is fixated on the idea that the key to curing her people's hunger is going to be a unique Zhou organ or genetic mutation. She carries with her a gene resequencer within her torso so that she can check the genetics of any Zhou she shakes hands with.

The act of hunting down and harvesting her own kind has not gone unnoticed by other Zhou, who are starting to wonder if C.U.R.E is not manipulating her towards their own ends. But her selfless work to care for desperate Zhou has also not gone unnoticed.

White Tide Traders

Trained by the Palantor, the White Tide call Setzer's Comet home and travel the stars in lightly-crewed freighters in search of economic opportunities for the Palantor Omos. They are known for their bartering skills, large number of limbs, technologically advanced weapons and white metal masks.

The White Tides are an extension of the Palantor and not an organically formed Zhou faction. Their leadership – known as the **Coven of Seven** – were all born on Setzer's Comet and are loyal to the Palantor. A typical White Tide is a Chrome, has little experience in natural environments, is fed by the Palantor, has many years of intense schooling and is instructed when to reproductively split.

Zilp (First of the Seven)

Leader of the Coven of Seven, this crotchety old Chrome Zhou is primarily responsible for a fleet of freighters that move ore and fuel for the Corporation. Zilp has a body plated in gold and six tentacle arms with various technological appendages.

Zzockack (Second of the Seven)

A tall and thin Chrome Zhou that likes to smoke for appearances and is primarily responsible for a space train that moves between Haven and the Cerberus system. Zzockack is an arms dealer but also likes to make money on the side smuggling Exilia Legion into and out of their home system.

Zwindilo (Third of the Seven)

A spherical Chrome Zhou that has a love of song and is primarily responsible for purchasing rare ores from the Kaltorans.

Ziphick (Fourth of the Seven)

A deceptively plain-looking organic Zhou that is primarily responsible for trading with distant colonies outside of Haven.

Zrock (Eyes of the Seven)

A sturdy Chrome Zhou with her head in her central torso, she is responsible for tracking movement within the various Corp stock markets.

Zilpa (Wings of the Seven)

Hovering on an anti-grav platform, this floating Chrome Zhou is responsible for procuring ancient spacecraft components and ensuring all White Tide Trader vessels are maintained.

Zedil (Scales of the Seven)

A fierce black-armoured Chrome Zhou that is primarily responsible for ensuring the honesty of all White Tide Traders and that all contractual obligations are enforced.

Hunger-Mad Zhou (NPC)

- **Common Motivations:** Eating, Survival.
- **Creator:** Archons (Divine Circles and Xio factions).
- **Population:** Unkown

"I've heard tales of sealed reports documenting spacecraft stasis chambers failing and Zhou crew getting them stomach rumblings that they is so famous for once the food starts to get low. This one time, a good-hearted Zhou requested that his buddies kill him by fire as death by airlock would be too painful. Well, his poor mates did none too good of a job and leftover bits of him came-a-hunting for them. The salvage crew that found their ship had to fight off the horrific beast just to escape with their lives."

– Dockside Kaltorn pub rumour
about the ghost ship Vintage Star.

The Zhou were created during the final months of the Great War by the last survivors of the Divine Circles and Xio Archon factions. They were deployed with devastating effect against numerous Nephilim fleets and their controlled planets. The war was all but over by this stage but the Zhou have been credited with extending the conflict for a few more months as the Nephilim were forced to adapt against this new threat in order to kill the final Archons.

Engineered into the DNA of the Zhou is an irrepressible desire to eat. Not only is consumption of organic matter soothing to a Zhou but it also enhances their abilities and expands their size which in turn increases their intelligence and hunger. Small Zhou have no intellect beyond that of an instinctual insect or animal, average-sized bipedal Zhou are a little less intelligent than a common person, while large Zhou can be staggeringly brilliant but cursed by an insatiable hunger.

Those who lose control over their desire to eat usually do so slowly and are often Wilders or have less of a connection to Praid. But at times a Zhou may simply find themselves without food and go mad due to starvation, a not unheard of experience on spaceships and facilities that are far from a terraformed world. A Zhou can live off most organic matter, but they desire complex living creatures – and especially Nephilim – the most.

Once a Zhou has begun to lose control and gorge itself it is almost impossible to stop without killing it by fire or isolating it before it has grown too large. Huge Zhou that were once well-adjusted individuals can be sliced down in size to reduce their cravings, but they will cease to be the person that they once were and will need to be rehabilitated by kind and skilled Zhou.

A ravenous Zhou can be incredibly cunning, especially if they were very knowledgeable to begin with and had numerous complex organs. Despite their vast intelligence, large Zhou can struggle to have the patience needed to understand other people, learn complex systems or form specialized organs. Choosing instead to spend their efforts on eating rather than the optimization of their minds or bodies. This is why most hunger-mad Zhou return to their fundamental blob-like shape.

> "All Zhou are aware that intellect and knowledge are two different resources, and that simple bulk is a poor substitute for lean effeciency."
>
> – Zarnir,
> Great chief of the Amber Bark Pathfinders.

Charring Hunters

All people of Praid have formed traditions around the hunting of giant Zhou who have lost control, even among the Twi-Far and non-bestial feral Nephilim clans. The most successful of these are the Charring Hunters from the forest Zhou tribes, whose influence and methods have spread to many others. The title of Charing Hunter may be given to a person from any species, and carries cultural weight among the Zhou, Twi-Far, Nephilim and Palantor of Haven as "one who is willing to fight our demons."

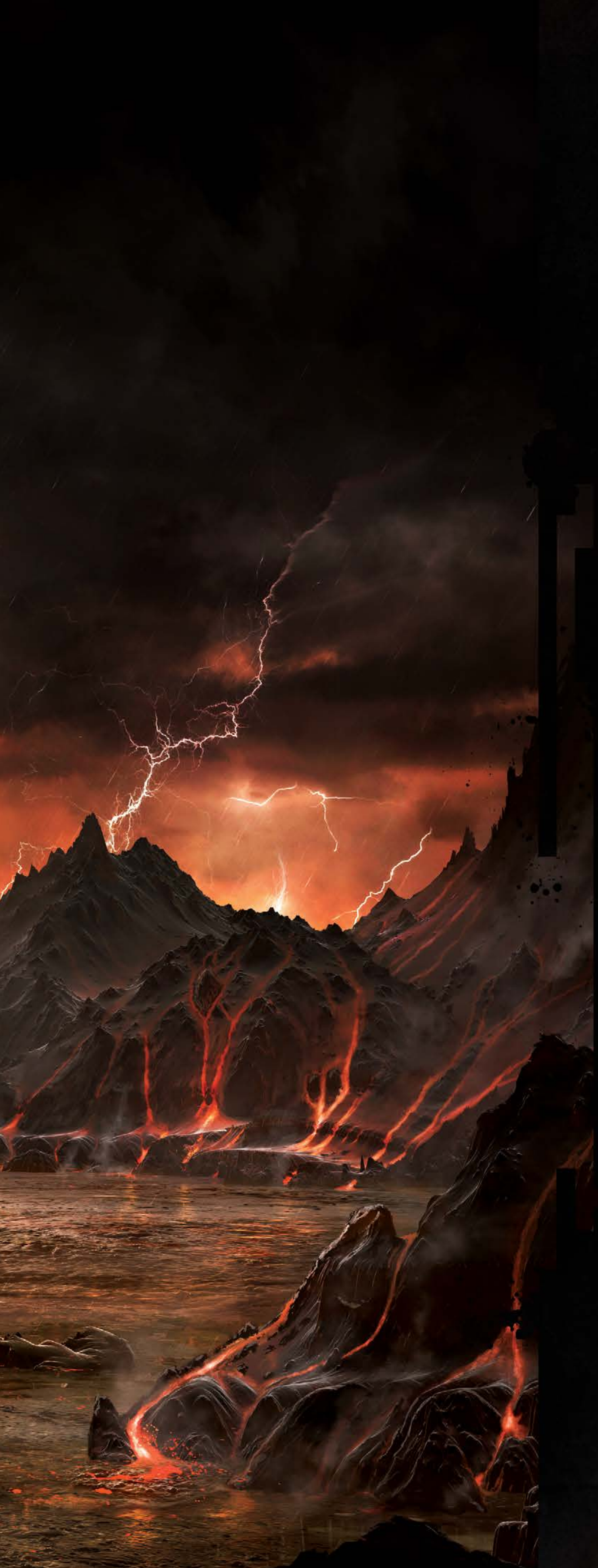
Traditional Charing Hunters make use of long blades, fire traps, and living bait. They accept that their prey is smarter than them and knows their ways, but are able to leverage their mark's bulky bodies and lack of control to guide them into firey killing pits without a route of escape. These methods have been expanded on with modern technologies, but their focus on manipulating their target's desires remains unchanged. A hunger-mad Zhou may know that it is being lured into a trap, but with the right arrangements of bait this will not matter.

If the giant Zhou's former self was particularly respected by their people a portion of its body will be sliced off and saved to form a new Zhou. These are the most common form of Zhou who do not have a twin and are viewed with a mixture of caution and sympathy by other Zhou. Those few Zhou who do not have a twin for other reasons will often lie about having a sibling just so they can avoid the suspicion that they came from a hunger-mad Zhou.

Colossal Intellect

During the Great War many Zhou stripped planets clean of all organic matter before starving to death. This process from deployment to eradication was usually completed within a single month. These **Colossal Zhou** were incredibly intelligent but lacked knowledge as they had no means of educating themselves before their demise. The massive Uber Zhou on Praid that lived long enough to gain knowledge and understanding was only ever a fraction of the size of those monolithic creatures.

These Colossal Zhou would have gained unfathomable cognitive ability during their brief existence and some still wish to channel this power. There are rumours that Palantor from House Snake and Corp scientist from C.U.R.E have both been secretly experimenting on large Zhou to develop methods of safely and reliably harnessing their great intellects. If such diabolical studies are successful it will only be a matter of time before they sacrifice an entire planet for their agenda.



Locations

Dushara.

Najlira stood with one hand pressed against the translucent steel window, watching from the Silverdawn's viewing deck. The surface of the planet bubbled and boiled, streams of molten mud slickly sliding down the rocky embankments and wetly slapping against the viscous rivers of filth.

Najlira wrinkled her nose. As a roaming Twi-Far, she had no issue with occasionally getting her hands dirty when life called for it. And yet, there was a barren ugliness to Dushara that repelled her and went beyond the grimy surface. Her Faren swirled uneasily within her soul as she gazed out upon the planet.

Hundreds of kilometres below, hazmat-suited Kaltoran workers scooped up buckets of boiling sludge, feeding it into time-weathered machines that would extract the rare minerals within.

Did they choose to be mud miners, Najlira wondered? As children, did they imagine their futures with wide-eyed optimism, picturing themselves joining up with large work-gangs, living on a scorched planet, picking through muck in ten-hour shifts? Or were they here because they saw an opportunity that others were unwilling to seize due to hardship and ugliness?

And yet, on this ugly world of mud and fire, beautiful glittering and rare minerals could be found beneath the surface. Lifted up from deep within the planet by volcanic mountain ranges that never slept. Najlira was here to do business for those same minerals, and she knew that the hardy mud-miners would not sell their labour cheaply.

In a way, hidden beauty had brought her to this place.

Sectors

See Sector Map on pg: 24.
See Archon Empire write-up from pg: 52.
See Rule Book pg: 73 for full Space Travel rules.

> "We are spoilt for space, but we are all desperate for easy-to-access resources that can be defended, extracted, and moved."
>
> – Mathias Ark,
> ARK Foundings logistics officer.

The Milky Way galaxy is a massive place, with one hundred thousand million stars. It is thought that Humanity only explored a small portion of this as they were restricted to the spread of the Ley Lines and the Ley Dust, though their titanic terraforming robots continue their endless work to this day. The Archon empire only claimed a tiny fraction of this explored area, as they did not want to follow in the footsteps of their creators and the sectors shown on the Sector Map in this book (pg: 24) only shows a portion of their empire, with your GM dictating its former size.

This region of space is made up of fourteen sectors that were former nations of Archon-created species, and is boarded by the Black Reach Nebula towards the galactic centre and the unclaimed Titanic Expanse. These sectors are largely woven together by the three arms of the Ley Lines that have spread throughout the region, dispensing their valuable Ley Dust to enable Jump Travel between the stars.

Population & Exploration

Haven is the most colonized star system in the region, with large colonies also in VAR-2205 and Cerberus, small colonies and outcast factions in Kasuf and other nearby systems such as LaX-2i, Nhar, Zi-3 and KIZ-45yiuY. If the people of Haven can maintain their peace they may be able to establish more Jump Gates and larger colonies in further star systems. The factions of Haven are eager for brave and skilled explorers to travel to these distant stars and report back on what they find.

Nobody knows what is out there or what the future holds. These uncharted fringe worlds are a mystery, but are sure to contain other forgotten children of the Archons and the X'ion, ruins from both the Archon and Human empires, and ancient weapon systems and foolhardy scientific ventures from the Great War.

System Designations

Star systems that were highly developed before the Great War were given names, while those that were undeveloped maintained their ancient Human-era catalogue title of letters and numbers. The Legion have renamed their home system to Cerberus, and the Corp have renamed much of VAR-2205 and more than a few other (former Kaltoran) locations.

Pre-Great War, star systems were typically catalogued into the following (see Location Guide book pg: 11): Prime, Core, Suburb, Production, Edge, Sparse, Hell, Dark, Frontier, Fringe, Virgin.

Black Reach Nebula

The Black Reach Nebula is a monolithically sized sector that is a sea of gas and dust clouds. It is estimated to span over a region of one hundred and fifty light-years, with a long edge angled parallel to the galactic centre. For all of civilization it has been the edge of the map, for both Humanity and the Archons. First crossed by the X'ion as it fled the murderous intent of its creators, none but the oldest Nephilim now know what is on the other side.

This distant melting pot of nebulas remains a dark mystery, with perhaps a thousand worlds lost inside its black embrace. Those who travel near it pick up eerie radio echoes reflecting off the masses of stardust and gas. Some frantic terror-soaked broadcasts date from the Great War, and others, reflecting off some distant resonator harken back even earlier, perhaps even to the era of Humanity.

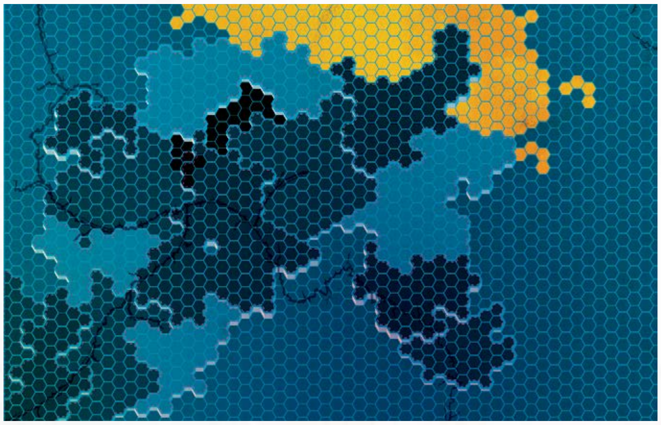
Ley Dust did not cross the sector during Humanity's time, but has since flowed past its edges and beyond with the arrival of new Ley Line cracks. Access has been granted to the brave and foolhardy, alike, opening up new stars and worlds that may have never been seen before.

Reach Rips

While the Black Reach is famous for its radio echoes that play havoc with crew morale and navigation systems, it is home to a wide range of astronomical phenomenon that can complicate travel. Ley Dust can be thin or absent in portions of the sector, and spacecraft must careful to plot their paths in a way to avoid being shot out of Jump Space and back into real space. Such events are known as Reach Rips and may result in month-long trips back to the Ley Dust through a sea of dangerous nebula clouds. During the Great War many refugees were stranded by these deadly Reach Rips.

Whispering Path

In preparation for the Great War the X'ion created its vast Nephilim armies in unknown labs beyond the Black Reach. Many of these forces slowly made their way through the sector to attack the Archon empire from multiple directions. But the X'ion and its largest force of three broods made their way along the Whispering Path, a long and meandering path around the edge of the Black Reach that has a steady flow of Ley Dust.



Halo Nebula

From the earliest habitation of the region by Humankind, the Halo has remained a mystery. Ancient data streams vaguely hint that the Archons had charted much of the nebula and the numerous rogue planets that forever wander the expanse of the nebula's seemingly endless innards. Analysis of data fragments and ancient Kaltoran dreams hint of great dangers within the Halo. There she sits, on the edge of the Haven system, beckoning explorers, scientists, maniacs, and scoundrels – seeking truth, or obfuscation, within the folds of Halo's stardust miasma.

Surveys by probes and captains steely willed enough to brave the Halo show that a portion of the nebula is composed primarily of highly volatile gases, whose potential energy would be easily ignited to catastrophic explosive force by burning thruster fuel or weapon discharge. These wide-rolling waves of incendiary vapour are known as the Phetonic Sea. Navigating this murky ocean of fiery vortices and infernal hazards is treacherous in the extreme. Even so, rumours of a lost fleet of Kaltoran refugee ships stranded somewhere in the Phetonic during the end of the Great X'ion War have spurred some to dare its fiery expanse – none have yet returned from this voyage into oblivion.

Beyond the Phetonic lie dozens of undiscovered worlds, nestled in the Halo, whose secrets remain hidden, and whose strange inhabitants or lost treasures entice many explorers to venture deep into the murky nebula, never to return.

After the Great War, many Mechonids – one of the most dangerous predatory creations born of Archon desperation – vanished into the Halo. Some believe these cyber-monstrosities were drawn into the sea of dust and gas by a great digital entity… or possibly in pursuit of the X'ion itself. Though X'ion's destination upon departing Haven is wholly unconfirmed, the Halo Nebula is a viable option.

The edge of the Halo is home to every manner of miscreant criminal, whether Legion, Kaltoran, Corp, or Nephilim. The Halo's mysteries and dangers are enough to dissuade all but the most dedicated avengers. Those with more enemies than friends in Haven often hide in the Halo, making homes for themselves from the hulls of wrecked ships, or upon a dark and cold rogue world.

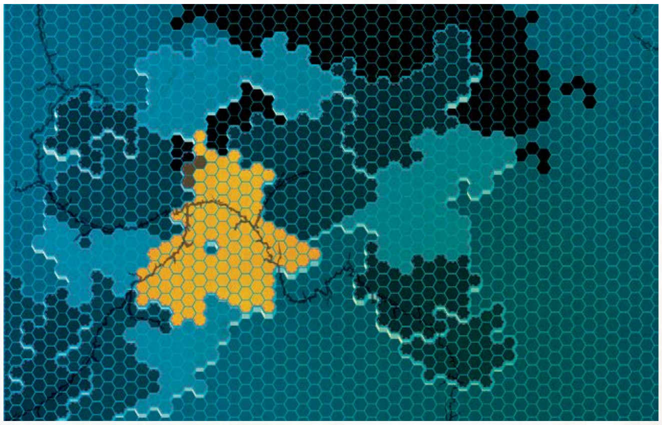
Kaltoran Nation

- See full Kaltoran write-up from pg: 83.
- See Haven System write-up from pg: 194.

Systems

- Haven
  - Prime system. Former Kaltoran capital star system. Multiple large colonies for most species. Jump Gates to VAR-2205 and Kasuf systems, with an incomplete Jump Gate.
- Hearth
- Respite
  - Edge system. Was an Ursai system in the early years of the Archon empire before it was given (with some resentment) to the Kaltorans and later became a major trade hub before the Archon's Fractured Age.
- Sanctuary

- BD-91
  - Binary sun system.
- BOV-89tY
  - Unexplored anomaly signal.
- CAL-34xxP
  - Sparse system. Only recently visited by the Galatèa merc ship and the missing Calvera Corp freighter.
- FIL-023
  - Binary sun system.
- KIZ-45yiuY
  - Production system. Has multiple small Legion colonies.
- POP-78
  - Binary sun system. Unexplored anomaly signal.
- QWE-t6
  - Unexplored anomaly signal.
- TOL-3a
- YUiO-38kP
  - Edge system. Surrounded by the Halo Nebula, was a minor trade hub, is now infested by Mechonids and littered with refugee wrecks form the Great War.
- xLk-0
- Zi-3
  - Suburb system. Binary sun system. Has small Corp and Remnant colonies, along with many pirates who target Remnant refugees on the Golden Trail from Kasuf.



Mondian Nation

- See Kasuf System write-up on pg: 200.
- See Cerberus System write-up on pg: 201.

Designer Note:

We have purposefully not defined or fleshed out all of the Archon's creations. This was done to encourage your creativity and to give your games a sense of exploration. A prime example of this are the Mondians who neighboured the ancient Kaltoran nation. Tiny lore points around them may be mentioned, but we will never define their stats, show what they look like or explain their culture; these are up to you to define.

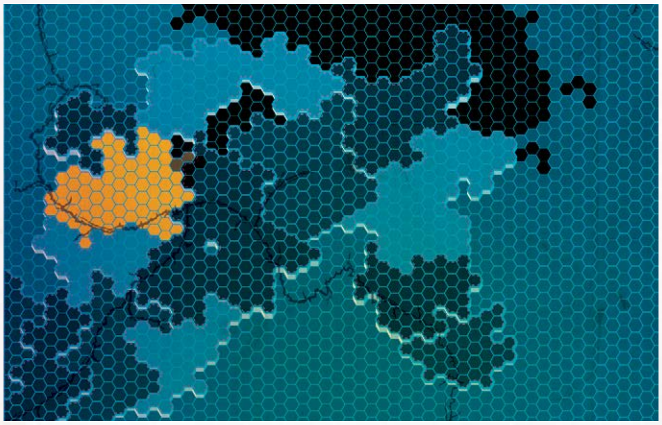
- See Rule Book pg: 118 for a guide on creating rules for new species.

We know that the Mondians were a favoured species of the Archons, ruins of their cities in the Kasuf system are occupied by people from Haven, their language and overall history would be understood, and they were attacked by two different Nephilim Archgenocrats (that were not the Devwi-Ich) and their Broods during the Great War.

Systems

- Cerberus
  - Sparse system. Only had one large Mondian city. Was occupied and renamed from Jok-i47 by the Legion.
- Kasuf
  - Core system. Became devoid of Ley Dust during the Great War. Multiple small colonies for most species. Large pirate and Mechonid presence. Jump Gate to Haven system.
- Qalb
  - Prime system. Former Mondian capital star system.

- LaX-2i
  - Sparse system. Has small Corp and Kaltoran colonies.
- NIL-3r
  - Binary sun system. Unexplored anomaly signal.



Titan Expanse

A vast region of unclaimed space that sits alongside the former Archon empire, gaining its name from the iconic wormhole that resides at its centre. The Titan Expanse is a diverse sector of space with a portion that is crossed by a Ley Line and a middle section that is sparsely coated in Ley Dust.

Before the Fractured Age, the Archons were preparing portions of the Expanse to be occupied by newly created species. It is thought that the Triumvirate Archon faction was hoping to use some of these prepared star systems for their proto-Legion creations before their plans were disrupted by the Great War. The Casila Curia are eager to explore the Titan Expanse to locate evidence of these proto-Legion, as a single DNA sample may hold the key to curbing their Inner Fire and glimpsing their creators' originally plan for their species.

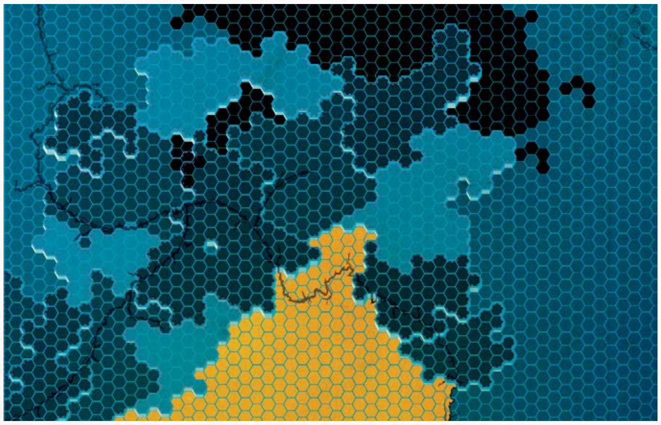
The Palantor also have an interest in the Expanse, as it possibly holds the secretive Paradise Quattuoria station that was used to create the Mechonids (and Legion). The Paradise station is sure to be under the control of the Mechonids, but they will be hibernating and it may be possible for a small team to infiltrate the station to gather data and shut down their access to the Palantor Network.

Titan's Maw

The only known wormhole near the Archon empire, and the final resting place of a titanic Human terraforming robot. It is not clear if the death of this Titan created the wormhole, or if the wormhole caused its death. All of this happened long before the Archon's creation, and the answer may have died with the extremist Halo Archon faction who spent hundreds of years studying this doorway through spacetime.

The Halo faction was a secretive group that maintained a base over the remains of the Titan robot in far orbit of the wormhole. It is not known if they were ever able to pass through it, but no doubt some of them would have tried when they realized they were doomed to die to X'ion or their Mechonid creations.

The Maw has not been seen by those outside the Halo faction since before the Fractured Age, but it is said to be a vortex of colour swirling into black, and slowly orbited by the remains of the great Titan robot.



Twilinger Nation

- See Archon faction write-up on pg: 54.
- See full Twi-Far write-up from pg: 161.

For much of their history the Twilinger nation held the seat of political power for the Archon empire as it was home to the golden Xana Quattuoria station and those that would become the Divine Circles Archon faction. It was also the first location to be attacked by the X'ion at the start of the Great War.

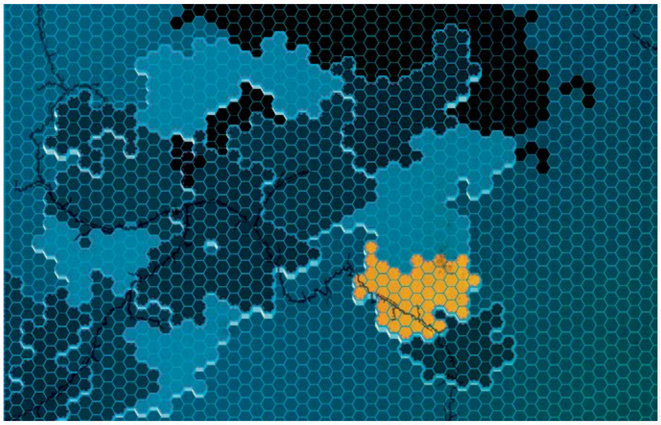
The Twilinger and their nation were created to harvest and process power sources that were unique to the tri-star Prism system. At the instigation of the Great War – before the creation of the Legion – the Twilinger were conscripted by the Archons and worked to death to power great Human-era superweapons and thrown into combats that they are ill-prepared to handle. This broke the Twilinger people and pushed those few who survived to flee out into uncharted space where they would eventually bond with the Faren and become the Twi-Far.

No Twi-Far or scouts from the people of Haven have yet reached Prism to discover its current status. A few Remnant recon vessels from Kumba have explored the edges of this ancient nation and their reports align with Twi-Far historical records of the region's planets suffering greatly under cataclysmic conflicts between the X'ion and the Archons when they were both at their most powerful. Shattered moons, stripped planets, mutated flora and fauna, altered environments and massive spacecraft graveyards will be a common sight.

The ancient Twilingers did not have the aesthetic tastes of the Twi-Far. They were an industry-focused people who worked with high-energy systems. Their buildings were sturdy structures that were crisscrossed with thick glowing energy cables and layered with plates of metal. Their cities were large and their homes small.

System

- Prism
  - Prime system. Triple sun system. Former Twilinger capital star system, home to the Divine Circles Archon faction and last known location of the Xana Quattuoria station.



Ursai Nation

- See full Remnant write-up from pg: 147.
- See VAR-2205 System write-up on pg: 200.

The Ursai nation was one of the oldest in the Archon empire and despite remaining one of the largest, it was once much larger. As the Ursai slowly declined in favour, portions of the nation were sliced off to be given to newer creations of the Archons, such as the Respite system that was given to the beloved Kaltorans.

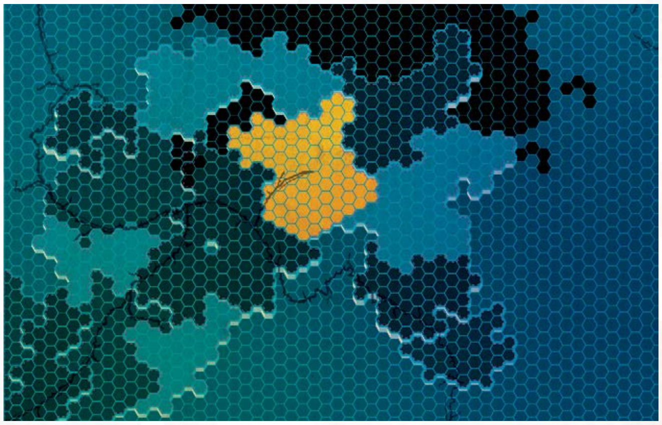
During the Fractured Age, the Ursai went through a revitalisation and grew in cultural pride as they sought to take back control of their lives from the neglectful Archons. Many large statues to Ursai figures of historical importance and grand stone buildings from this time are dotted throughout the region.

Due to the activation of the Deatomiser the Ursai nation is now frequented by psionic Echoes and nanites. There are fewer feral Nephilim and Mechonids within this region, and much of its ancient infrastructure remains intact due to the Nephilim favouring the use of poisons against the Ursai during the Great War. Many from around Haven would love to gain access to these valuable facilities, but they remain well guarded by ghosts of the dead.

Systems

- Kumba
  - Prime system. Former Ursai capital star system and final resting place of the Arcadia Quattuoria station. Large Echo presence due to the use of the ancient Human-made Deatomiser.
  - The Ursai/Remnant home planet of Kumba Prime is a desert world that is slowly being lost to the Echoes.
- Nhare
  - Edge system. Small Vargarti, Kaltoran and Remnant colonies.

- VAR-2205
  - Sparse system. Binary sun system. Commonly known as the Var system. Large Corp and Vargarti colonies, with small Kaltoran and Palantor presence. Jump Gate to Haven system.



Haven System

- See Haven system map on pg: 26.
- See the Location Guide book for a full write-up on this location.

"When I was a dune scrapper lad back on Varsphere I never imagined I'd see so many folk as now live in Haven, eat so many different foods, hear so many different languages, or see so many species. I now pass through space stations the size of cities, walk planets that have begun to heal from the Great War, and overlook a sea of great ships flying across the great void with cargo holds filled with goods from distant worlds.

In Haven, I see all that, and something much more: a hope for a future. We Corps have lit the beacon in Haven, the rebirth of civilization and the dawn of a new era."

– Civil Logistics Assessor Conner Tyk,
Pinnacle Fuel.

No other known system has rebounded from the devastation inflicted by the X'ion War like Haven. Once the capital system of the ancient Kaltoran nation, it is now home to numerous species and cultures. While life is tough for most and none know if peace will remain between the species, many see Haven as the great hope for the future.

The system is ideal for habitation. The sun, Esh provides rich but gentle warmth to its planets in a wide goldilocks zone. The number of terraformed worlds is high, and the habitable biomes are diverse. The worlds and asteroid belts are resource-rich, and the legend of Haven's crowning economic jewel, the gas giant Makor, was so great that it reached the distant Corporates on Varsphere. They uprooted their entire civilization to claim it as their own and re-name it Alabaster. An action that would lead to the awakening of the surviving Nephilim of Eden, Kaltorans of Kadash, deadly Mechonids, Palantor of Setzer's Comet and attract the attention of the distant Legion of Cerberus, Remnant of Kumba, nomadic Twi-Far, and marauding Oni.

Despite the wealth of resources, the system is marked by the uneasy coexistence of these species that have emerged from the Years of Darkness. Every species has come to depend on Haven in some way for their prosperity, but while these ambitions often align with others, they are also commonly pitched against one another. The conflicts over planetary space, resource rights, transportation lanes, and vengeance over past grievances are frequent and fierce.

From the resource-rich gas giant Alabaster, the seat of the Corp's ever-growing wealth, to the swampy jungles of Mishpacha, the frigid cold of Lilith, the hull-melting heat of volcanic Gehenna, the cerulean waters of Kadash, and the battle-scarred crust of ruined Eden, and in all the places in between, life finds places to survive, build, trade, and thrive. Haven is in every place alive and teems with possibilities for enterprising ship captains, mercenary crews, and adventurers seeking to make their fortune among the stars.

Alabaster

- **Mean Diameter:** 164,981 km
- **Rotation Period:** 12.3 hours
- **Surface Gravity:** 32.9 m/s^2
- **Orbital Period:** 58.2 years

- See full Corporation write-up from pg: 64.

"The Corps aim to rule Haven / with a crown of Alabaster / studded with six gems / and a fist of pure Deuterium."

– Anenyasha Moto,
Remnant poet.

The gas giant Alabaster (formally known as Makor to the pre-war Kaltorans) is one of the richest sources of pure Deuterium in the known galaxy, making it a lodestone for economic progress and Corp rule. The gas giant's population is spread across six massive space stations in orbit above the tumultuous milky-white storms that give the planet its name.

The six Alabaster stations form their own solar system within Haven, with Alabaster's rich Deuterium as their life-giving sun. **Alabaster One** houses headquarters for every major corporation as well as the Board of Management, making it the central hub of everything Corp-related. If one can afford the docking fees, a crew can gain access to all of the movers-and-shakers in Corp society (or, at least, their executive assistants' administrative aides).

However, more and more start-up corporations, new money investors, and entrepreneurs are making their company homes on **Alabaster Two**, or 'Glass'. Glass was the primary Deuterium refinery in the system, but now is a pleasure platform for the nouveau riche, the up-and-comers, and the fabulously wealthy. With less institutional oversight, Glass is also where many can squirrel away their more secretive, risky, or downright unethical innovations while they search for mass-market applications.

Alabaster Three should have completed the trinity of Corp culture and lifestyle, but instead languishes behind a half-hearted quarantine after a chemical weapons attack carried out by Kaltoran terrorists. A chemical suppression system keeps the risks low in most sectors by drizzling a fine mist across the whole station while bright neon signs cast their glow onto puddled alleyways and rain slicked glass. The law of Three is take care of your own, because the rest of the Corps sure aren't going to.

Alabaster Four is the primary fuel refinery in the system, managed and maintained by Pinnacle Fuel, and the major industrial hub of the planet. **Alabaster Five** is the primary trading hub, built around the circular frame of the Var-Haven Jump Gate. Anything that can be imagined can be bought on Five… for the right price.

Alabaster Six remains incomplete as ARK Foundings continues to negotiate workers strikes. Rumours swirl that Keaton Ark hopes to extract his company from the deal and foist the failing station – and responsibility for its population of workers – onto another with more money than sense.

Eden

- **Mean Diameter:** 73,421 km
- **Rotation Period:** 32.2 hours
- **Surface Gravity:** 9.8 m/s^2
- **Orbital Period:** 1.7 years

» See full Nephilim write-up from pg: 113.

"From this dead world, the Nephilim rise to claim their destiny astride the galaxy."

– Attributed,
dubiously attributed to the Devwi-Ich.

Once, Eden was the lush capital of the Kaltoran nation as they spread across Haven. Now, it resembles a dead thing lousy with parasites and cracked, rotten skin. Appearances are deceiving, though, because the blighted planet is one of the key powerhouses in the re-emergence of a great civilisation, and is now the throne-world of the Eden Brood Nephilim under the watchful guidance of the monstrously powerful and cunning Devwi-Ich.

The Nephilim city of **Necronus** soars into the toxic skies from a foundation of great Nephilim warship corpses; the one safe harbour in an ocean of nuclear fallout and toxic sludge leftover from the X'ion War. Necronus is the largest single city in the Haven system, growing – quite literally – thanks to the Nephilim's command of bio-technology. Necronus's political elite squabble and feud in the upper echelons while below the newly formed Nephilim nation creates spaceports, marketplaces, and research labs unlike any other, ready to play host to the multitudes of Haven and beyond. The Devwi-Ich's cunning is unmatched by any other individual with the Haven system. It spins its web of influence, offering the other species what they need to cement the Nephilim's place in the stars.

Outside Necronus, however, the aftermath of the Great War is felt more acutely. Amidst the wreckage of the Nephilim's final suicidal charge against the Kaltoran a million million feral Nephilim prowl, mindless and bestial. These Wild Tribes of Eden's wastelands, under the guidance of warlord Nephilim, hunt one another, eking out a brutal existence. The people of Necronus regularly conduct forays into the wilderness to capture feral Nephilim and uplift them into the Eden Brood – severing their connection with their warlord and replacing it with a bond to the Devwi-Ich. Given enough time, the Devwi-Ich will surely unite the scattered Nephilim under its singular command.

In the shadows, cults of X'ion move furtively through Eden societies. This was the place the X'ion itself killed the final Archon. It is a place of power, where many still beleive that the Nephilim's ultimate purpose is to serve the X'ion.

Of the four moons of Eden, only **Emuna** is terraformed and hospitable to life. During the war, this moon housed many Nephilim military and scientific outposts which have now been lost to time as the hardy, red-leafed flora has reclaimed and obscured much from casual aerial observation.

Gehenna

- **Mean Diameter:** 4,692 km
- **Rotation Period:** 43.8 days
- **Surface Gravity:** 7.6 m/s^2
- **Orbital Period:** 124.2 days

Gehenna embraces Esh closer than her sister worlds, bathing in the mother star's solar winds and fearsome superheated radiation. Little more than a sphere of magma, her crust, though thin and scorched black, is riddled with deposits of the rarest minerals in the Haven system. A witch's brew of intense solar energy, geothermal chaos, and plasma storms give rise to alchemical feats beyond any laboratory. Though the planet's pyroclastic surface, bereft of water and clean air, scorns traditional life, the lure of great mineral and elemental treasures have drawn the occupants of Haven to establish perilous mining colonies on Gehenna since time immemorial.

Before the Great War, Kaltorans braved the hellish fires of Gehenna at the behest of their Archon masters, only abandoning operations on this volcanic treasure-trove when the Nephilim fleet threatened the system. Now, newly risen from the waters of Kadash, the Kaltorans plunge themselves into the fires of Gehenna once more. This time their race against pyroclastic destruction for rare elements is spurred by a desire to reclaim their underwater cities at an accelerated pace. The energy demanded to bring their dark pit cities back online far exceeds Kadashan reserves, and the sea-repelling anti-gravity wells require the rarest elements to function at their full potential.

The Kaltorans have constructed mobile environmental mining modules for deployment across the planet, many the size of a small starship and capable of burrowing through the planet's crust. While impressive specimens of technology, these mining modules are hellish on their inhabitants. The filtration units strive in vain to manufacture breathable air from the sulfuric and ashy vapours on Gehenna, their anti-grav nodes strain against the planets ever-changing surface, and accidents and catastrophic losses of entire modules and their family crew happen all too often.

With great pressure comes great costs, and conditions throughout the mining operations on Gehenna grow increasingly dire every year. Family tribes with less influence commonly seek out the wealth of Gehenna in hopes of funding a better life for themselves, and it is not uncommon for operations to employ extreme measures to keep the minerals flowing. Those without the resources to procure a mining module of their own will often work as search and rescue operatives, salvagers and hired hands.

The Dray Mining Consortium has its designs for Gehenna. They have already begun extracting surface minerals with shielded large drones, though their efforts are inferior in every way to the Kaltorans. For now, the Corp is careful to avoid any regions regularly mined by Kaltoran modules, but tensions are on the rise.

The Corp is unaccustomed to acting as second fiddle, and the conflict between the two groups is certain if Dray can convince their heat-hating Legion mercenaries to work around Gehenna with reduced hazard pay.

Kadash

- **Mean Diameter:** 10,876 km
- **Rotation Period:** 43.1 hours
- **Surface Gravity:** 9.6 m/s^2
- **Orbital Period:** 321.2 days

- See full Kaltoran write-up from pg: 83.

"Kadash has always been the home of the Kaltoran soul."
– Tamar Filch,
Mind Keeper of Carcho Temple.

When it became clear that the Kaltorans would lose the Great War and their capital planet of Eden, they fled to hastily constructed undersea cities on the water world Kadash. Trapped for a century in darkness beneath roiling waves and with limited supplies, the Kaltoran broke down in horrific ways. Now, still reeling from the genetic memories of past generations, Kaltoran society is rebuilding, embracing the challenges posed by their subterranean subaquatic pit city homes.

The city of **Yasha** is the largest and most visited pit city on Kadash, and the best place for off-worlders. Relatively stable and mostly free from roaming cannibalistic Kaltoran Dark Tribes, Yasha is a meeting point for Kaltorans and other societies. Guided by the heads of sprawling family networks in a political system that is guided by patriarchs, matriarchs and a family dinners, Yasha thrives from the regular influx of new visitors, new technologies, and new ideas from off world.

Other pit cities did not emerge as quickly, or with as much stability, as Yasha. **New Eden** suffered a catastrophic failure early in construction and is, to this day, waterlogged, dark, and dangerous. Dark Tribes hunt visiting expeditions through the narrow service ducts and flooded boulevards of the once opulent city. A small handful of Kaltorans, and their paid mercenaries, currently hold the upper floors of the city in an attempt to lead the Dark Tribes back into the light, but without success.

Carcho temple pre-dates the exodus from Eden. The Mind Keepers who lived there worked with refugees to rapidly expand their settlement, and establish spiritual and social rhythms to keep the worst of the Years of Darkness at bay. Now the temple plays a key role in healing the Kaltoran people from the trauma of their dark history, helping young Kaltoran come to terms with the genetic memories of their ancestors as they survived the barbarism and cannibalism of the post-war fall. Pilgrimages to the temple are common, and not only for Kaltorans.

The depths of Kadash are populated by fearsome Nephilim monsters bred for undersea warfare and sowed across the oceans during the final days of the war. These massive leviathans lurk in deep places, far from civilisation, waiting to strike at unwary submersibles that stray too close. The Kaltoran people of the **Uthar** pit city have a culture that includes hunting these most dangerous of Nephilim foes.

Far above, the single moon Archech houses spaceports and ship mechanics specialising in retooling vacuum-rated vessels with aqua shields for undersea exploration on Kadash. Alternately, if a captain does not want to alter their ship to visit Kadash, the Kaltoran families on Archech can ferry them to the pit city of their choice, for a fee.

Liberty Belt

"Till the Corps came with their Legion thugs, weren't nothing out here but dust and memories. That was the way I liked it."
– Ruth Gearthumper,
family matriarch.

The Liberty Belt is a sparse asteroid field farther out from Haven's sun than the Monopoly Belt and far poorer in resources. Though clusters of colliding rocks exist, most of the belt's stony denizens are lonely asteroids, each several hundred or even thousands of kilometres away from its nearest neighbour.

In the halcyon days before the Great War, the Belt was known by its Kaltoran name, Eaven Geshem, and was dotted with massive space stations that contained entire tribal families and ancient hermitages where Kaltorans would meditate upon their ancestors. When the ancient Kaltorans fell back to defend their system the Nephilim ransacked their stations and pillaged their beautiful hermitages for anything of value or use. Now, the ruined stations and their few hidden monasteries float in the void, and a few Kaltoran families are reclaiming these, supported by supplies from Kadash. The Kaltorans are desperate to find new mining claims and reclaim lost ancestral knowledge – anything to return the light to their dark pit cities on Kadash.

The most established station in the Liberty Belt is **Anah Station**, from which the matriarch **Ruth Gearthumper** oversees the formation of a Liberty mining network. She is a much loved and well-respected anti-grav engineer in her own right, and an expert in motivating and coaching the generation of younger Kaltorans working under her oversight. However, many people believe that over the long term, the fragmented Gearthumper family doesn't have the strength to withstand the machinations of the Corp as they continue to prospect in the Belt.

The Kaltorans have relied upon speed, flexibility, and precision to compete with the hulking Corporation mining endeavours, allowing the Corp to push them out of rich mining locales shortly after taking the best ores. The overconfident and pushy Corps have met with unexpected brutality from the Kaltorans within the Liberty Belt when they have accidentally intruded upon places of secret holy significance. One such victory by ARK Foundings against the Kaltorans destroyed an asteroid that concealed a sacred hermitage, which led to a massive retaliatory chemical attack on the Alabaster Three space station.

Among the Belt's many strategic assets is the organic Nephilim Jump Gate linking the Haven system to distant Kasuf. The Gate is maintained by a company of Nephilim and Corp engineers and, unlike its wild Kasuf twin, the sentient Gate is compliant and reliable. Control of the Gate is always a matter of utmost priority, as pirates from the Kasuf system often attempt stealth attacks from among the asteroids to secure control of both ends of this vital inter-system pathway for just long enough to grant their companions passage.

Lilith

- **Mean Diameter:** 6,126 km
- **Rotation Period:** 148 hours
- **Surface Gravity:** 10.4 m/s^2
- **Orbital Period:** 187 years

- See full Legion write-up from pg: 99.

The forlorn Lilith, her orbit cast farthest from the sun, struggles against the icy void of deep space. Exiled to the shadows of her sister-worlds, and grasping at mere glimmers of Esh, whose erstwhile rays shed but meagre radiance and little warmth on this small and dismal world, Lilith is Haven's icy bauble, dangling on the system's raggedy edge, solitary and bereft of colour.

Little more than a spinning ball of ice, whose geothermal energy is barely capable of sustaining even the hardiest life forms, it is little wonder then that the resilient and disciplined Legion find Lilith's cold embrace most welcoming. Lilith serves as the advance base for the Legion Auxilia's theatre of operations in Haven, led by the indomitable Athena 'Lady Vengence' Kosta.

Lilith is both orphan and gatekeeper. Most non-Jump Gate entries into the Haven system pass through Lilith's orbital path. Thus the Legion Auxilia are able to glumly monitor most travel in and out of Haven from their cold fortress planet. They mostly allow traffic to pass unmolested (except for Remnant refugees coming from distant Kumba), though on occasion a ship or convoy will mysteriously vanish. The Legion neither confirms nor denies their involvement in the disappearance of these vessels. Overtures and queries are always met with icy silence.

Olympus

The gateway to Lilith, and the sentinel at its doorstep, is the massive warship Olympus. While it can Jump, the Olympus often maintains a standard orbit of Lilith proper. Olympus is a block-shaped collection of vast cargo holds, gun emplacements, hangar bays, and is home to six full squadrons of fighters. The ship is commanded by Imperator **Draxis Kul**, one of Athena Kosta's most trusted officers. who shares Athena's vision for the Legion people. His diplomatic skills (rare for a war-hardened Legion) make him the perfect "face" of the Auxilia's outreach efforts to the various diplomats stationed on the Olympus.

Olympus is a way station for goods and supplies, not to mention large payments rendered to the Auxilia from the Corporation for the many security and military (not to mention paramilitary) operations fulfilled by the Legion. This remuneration is organised into well-guarded convoys on Olympus, eventually disembarking from the warship for Cerberus Prime.

Many criminal rings and bands of pirates consider these convoys the ultimate heist: marauding pirates, feral Nephilim warships, and deadly Mechonids have attempted to hijack every shipment, but they are foiled each time. The Legion have never lost one of their precious payment convoys, which is an important point of pride for the Auxilia of Haven.

Mishpacha

- **Mean Diameter:** 22,457 km
- **Rotation Period:** 28.2 hours
- **Surface Gravity:** 9.66 m/s^2
- **Orbital Period:** 7.1 years

- See the Rachel Swaggers Guide to Mishpacha book for a full write-up on this location.

Mishpacha was always a garden world. Pre-War Kaltoran civilisation on the world never spread beyond a handful of major metropolitan hubs. But after bombardment from X'ion's mutagenic bombs and the invasion and subsequent abandonment of Nephilim creatures, the character of this verdant world changed. Ancient ruined buildings choke beneath thick vines that writhe with uncanny energy, and Nephilim-mutated wildlife prowl the depths.

Mishpacha is considered a frontier world in the Haven system, and it is steadily being claimed. Every species has a presence on Mishpacha. Kaltorans dream of reclaiming their birthright. Nephilim aim to reunite their wild brethren into the Brood. Corps diligently exploit the abundant natural resources. Zhou find a spiritual freedom amidst the wilderness. Legion armies battle daily to protect their clients from the hazards of the hostile world. And Remnant seek to etch out a new home on isolated isles.

Three major population centres dominate civilized life on Mishpacha. **Beacon**, a Kaltoran created city in the crater of a dormant volcano on the planet's largest continent, is a ramshackle hive of scum and villainy to some, and a prime example of inter-species cooperation to others. Accessible only via shuttle or spacecraft, Beacon is a protected hub from which many (often ill-fated) adventures on Mishpacha have been launched. To the south, **Mishpacha Two** is a Corp city connecting the surface to the stars via a massive space elevator to **Marvel Station** and, from there, the other stations around Mishpacha. It is not the largest Corp city on the planet – that honour goes to the Dray Mining Consortium city, **Mishpacha Three** – but the space elevator makes it the most influential. Finally, the Nephilim city **Gaj-Osh** lurks amidst the north-eastern trees, spreading its great organic spires and tendrils into the forests in search of wild feral Nephilim to capture and uplift into modern Nephilim society. There, Nephilim scientists tinker daily with all the incredible evolutionary advancements that have occurred in the last century in this planet-sized petri dish of unbridled mutation.

Out in the wilderness, travellers and settlers are likely to be threatened by native Mishpachan species that have been twisted out of shape by the X'ion's mutagen bombs, and roaming bands of feral Nephilim designed for jungle warfare before being abandoned by their masters. And more horrifying things lurk in the shadows of the trees, too. Slumbering Mechonids that once tirelessly hunted all sentient organic creatures, now tentatively sleep as they await new prey. Oni slavers make hit-and-run attacks against unprotected homesteads. And in the deepest, most remote parts of the main continent, the great Meggido – a Great War Nephilim genocrat – raises his brood of Tre'-Bach children. Perhaps, given time, his might will rival the Devwi-Ich itself

Monopoly Belt

» See the Rachel Swaggers Guide to Mishpacha book for a full write-up on this location.

"Pirates, Oni slavers, Nephilim, and more. It's a good place to find work. Just steer clear of the monks. Those guys give me the creeps."

– Derek Spin,
notorious Corp bounty hunter.

The Monopoly Belt earned its moniker from the Corp when they arrived from Var. The Dray Mining Consortium has extracted trillions of credits worth of materials from asteroids in the Belt, and it seems that there are trillions more to go. Output ranges from mundane but essential minerals for the construction of ships, stations, and cities to exotic elements such as Lontinum, an essential component in the manufacture of powerful energy weapons.

Mining in the Belt is carried out by Corp semi-autonomous Resource Extraction Points crewed by overworked miners, robots, and FLESH, in rivalry with smaller and more efficient Kaltoran outfits, usually single family units who are making use of their genetic memories to locate high-value roids. Conflicts and scuffles between mining crews are common as the Dray Mining Consortium continues to aggressively expand and push all others out.

Far from the population centres of Haven, the Belt also plays host to networks of pirate crews, with the greatest concentration of ne'er-do-wells found on **Minos Station**. Hundreds of pirates make their base out of Minos Station under the Nephilim Pirate Queen Black Quietus, who sits upon the Crooked Throne. Any pirate, outlaw, or scoundrel operating in Haven must pay fealty to Black Quietus or risk a visit from her assassins or, in extreme cases, the Queen herself.

Rumours abound that ancient Nephilim warships drift in and out of the Belt, hiding from the invasive scans of expanding civilisation. These semi-feral intelligent ships, occassionaly with their own crews of war-ready Nephilim, lurk in the black, as they hunt down their next meal or the call of a Nephilim with the strength to once again unite them again under a single banner.

What is of greater concern yet are the Oni slavers operating out of the Belt, using the same protection from observation to carry out their cruel raids on Mishapcha settlements and beyond from their great lair; a single **World Ship** with destroyed engines. Such a ship is a great threat to the system, but should another World Ship arrive, it could be the end of free civilisation in Haven.

The single largest celestial body in the Belt is the planetoid Rugerero, home of the Remnant Order of Redemption. This society of reclusive monks seek to live out the orders of the All-Being, expressed in martial might. So far the Order's primary focus appears to be the fanatical elimination of pirates and slavers from the Belt, but one cannot wonder at the ultimate aims of their enigmatic Grand Master.

Setzer's Comet

» See full Palantor write-up from pg: 133.

Named after an ancient astronomer centuries before the creation of the Kaltorans and the occupation of Haven, none ever suspected that this unremarkable comet of rock, dust and ice held a secret cloaked Human facility that tapped into a network of sentient digitized Human minds. The Palantor network node was secretly placed there by the Human Yalluma Clan and maintained by advanced servile robots. Only revealing itself after the Years of Darkness when the newly emerged Palantor sought the aid of the other species of Haven in their war against the Mechonids.

The Palantor have considerably expanded their infrastructure on the comet. Adding housing, factories, a drydock, a small region with life support systems for visitors and the **Tengoku** fortress that guards their home with an impressive armament of weapons. The Palantor know they are on borrowed time as the Mechonids will eventually find their home and attack it in force, but they are going to extreme lengths to delay this event for as long as they can. All visitors must submit their electronic equipment for inspection (and secret data harvesting) and then receive temporary passes to travel in specific areas.

Setzer's Comet is also home to a large number of Zhou, most notably from the White Tide Traders tribe. These Zhou do not require life support, are provided with food, a safe home, and education by the Palantor in exchange for their loyalty. Visitors to the comet are often surprised to see so many guard and service jobs being filled by Zhou.

Outer Region

In the far reaches of Esh's orbit where few visit, reside three lonely un-terraformed dwarf planets: Sababa, L'chaim and Kibbutz, and the edge of the mysterious Halo Nebula.

The innermost dwarf planet **Sababa** is an ice-covered world with a rocky core that is occasionally used by smugglers for temporary storage or as a final stopover for freight spacecraft who are about to make the long trip to the Var or Nhare systems. **L'chaim** is an ellipsoid-shaped planetoid due to its rapid rotation. It is a cold rock that none visit except for the Auxilia Legion maintenance crew who must occasionally service a deep-space sensor that resides on the planet.

But of all three worlds, none are visited as infrequently as the black world of **Kibbutz** whose distant orbit commonly takes her through the edge of the Halo Nebula. Little is known of this tiny rocky world as it was the location of a private Archon homestead before the Great War and was off-limits to all who were uninvited. Current intelligence suggests that a Mechonid or rogue Nephilim force is stockpiling resources on a secret subterranean base and are covertly transferring personnel and supplies to nearby spacecraft while it is shrouded in the nebula. Even if their existence on Kibbutz is pure fiction, this threat alone keeps their enemies at bay.

Kasuf System

» See Kasuf system map on pg: 28.

"The thing about Ley Dust is they make dead space feel not so dead. You don't know the depths of space can feel 'till you fly somewhere with no Dust. In Kasuf you must traverse the void in full, no shortcuts through Dust-powered jump portals, just you and the cold expanse of nothingness between tiny oasis' that are worlds."

– Bonny Mike,
Kaltoran freighter pilot.

Ley Dust and related technologies form the backbone of interstellar travel. This physics-defying substance facilitates faster-than-light travel between star systems, and allows the creation of exotic psionic effects. Most places in the known galaxy have a latent background amount of Ley Dust floating in the void of space. The remote Kasuf system has none.

Ley Dust to power faster-than-light travel throughout the Kasuf system must be imported in specially designed, but imperfect, canisters. These canisters have a limited lifespan, and once the Dust is exhausted or has escaped crews are unable to use faster-than-light travel, or psionic abilities. Luckily, Ley Dust canisters can be purchased at a premium from friendly Corp representatives at the Kasuf-Haven Jump Gate. Less luckily, ships with Ley canisters are frequent targets of the Bloodied Coin pirates who infest the system.

Despite the difficulties posed by the Kasuf system's anomalous lack of latent Ley Dust, the system is being rapidly colonised by explorers, entrepreneurs, and scientists. Relics of the long-forgotten Mondian nation are being rediscovered. Planets in the system range wildly from a garden world full of predatory plants, to a furnace world of molten stone, to a gas giant hiding a titanic terraforming robot swaddled in methane clouds, to a fortress-world constructed by ancient humans.

The riches of the Kasuf system are being diligently exploited by all the major corporations. Control of the single Jump Gate in and out of the system – an ancient Nephilim construct controlled through invasive surgeries and mental conditioning – rotates between the Body Count Conglomerate, Bradford Investment, and the Dray Mining Consortium, each supported by their contracted Legion forces. However, sometimes control of the gate will slip to the cruel Bloodied Coin pirates who will extort trade and travel until they are, inevitably, dislodged from the Gate by the Corps and Legion. The semi-sentient Gate also attracts regular attacks by feral Nephilim and reaping Mechonids from across the Kasuf system, trying to save or destroy the gate respectively.

Travel to the Kasuf system is risky, but the rewards are commensurate. Trade goods, knowledge, and the tantalising secrets of the lost Mondians people and ancient humans await a crew brave enough to venture into the frontier. Just keep a Ley cannister, and a weapon, handy at all times.

VAR-2205 (Var) System

» See VAR-2205 system map on pg: 30.
» See full Corporation write-up from pg: 64.

"Varsphere and its deserts have forged our people into resilient problem-solvers, focused our minds, strengthened our bodies and divided the strong from the chaff. Capitalism – the power of humanity – unites us and propels us forward. Let the stars be ours."

– Vix 'the Smiling Slayer',
founder of the Corporation.

When the Archons discarded the Vargarti and set the Ursai to keep them away from the rest of the galaxy, it was in the distant VAR-2205 system. Unlike other systems, the Archons and humans before them seemingly never intended to inhabit this insignificant system, and the terraforming of planets there was half-hearted and seemingly unfinished. The system's utter lack of significant population, ancient ruins, and general interest from the Archons may have been what kept it relatively safe during the Great War. Few Nephilim sorties made their way to Var. Few, but not none.

The most important thing to ever come from Var are the Corporations – a subculture of the Vargarti species led by the charismatic visionary **Vix**, discoverer of Capitalism and founder of the Corp. Vix was able to lead the nomadic Vargartians to exploit the few resources of the system and build ships capable of interstellar travel to Nhare and eventually to the Haven system, sparking the re-emergence of his people from the Years of Darkness. But not all Vargartians followed Vix out of the Var system. Many more remained in Var, either due to contentment with their hardscrabble nomadic existence, or because they were left behind.

Now Var and Haven are linked by a Palantor-made Jump Gate, making travel between the two systems economically viable. Var is set to join the slowly emerging civilisations that are spreading out of Haven, whether the Vargatians want to or not.

Four planets and two asteroid belts orbit the binary stars of the system. Of those planets only one, **Varsphere**, boasts any significant population. The gas giant **Bourse** boasts two small colonies among its moons, but little else save wild myths of an ancient creature lurking beneath the pink clouds. **Equity** is a resource-poor rock known best as the sight of a massive Mechonid assault on an ARK Foundings facility built atop an ancient human observation post. Mechonids still roam the labyrinthian tunnels below the surface to this day. And **Midas**, the small planet closest to the binary stars, is a melting volcanic world of interest largely to Palantor scientists keeping their purposes secret.

The distance from civilisation does make Var appealing for long-haul smugglers moving product outside established trade routes, pirates searching for isolated vessels to pick off, and powerful CEOs aiming to cut deals far from prying sensors. The darkness beyond the light of the twin suns holds many secrets.

Varsphere

- **Mean Diameter:** 14,906 km
- **Surface Gravity:** 9.8 m/s^2
- **Rotation Period:** 26.5 hours
- **Orbital Period:** 273 days

"I lost my home, I lost my thud cow / Corp took it all away / But I've got my gun, I've got some bullets / Might see if I can't take it all back."

– Old Varsphere farmer folk song.

The only terraformed world in VAR-2205 is Varsphere, home of the Vargartians and, by extension, the Corps. A wind-swept and sand-blasted wasteland from pole to pole, Varsphere does not seem to be the planet that would give rise to the smartly dressed culture- and capital-powerhouses that currently live their best lives aboard cutting-edge space stations orbiting Alabaster in the Haven system. But the harsh deserts, centuries-long droughts, and biting sandstorms of Varsphere are perhaps what gave the Vargartians the ability to become the Corps. Without this cruel environment and the ingenuity they learned there, the roaming tribes of scrap-miners and rust-mechanics might never have made it to the stars.

The vast majority of the planet's population live as their ancestors did: travelling the wastes in between secret waterholes, maintaining their equipment with salvaged parts, and trading only occasionally with other tribes. The three largest clans meet occasionally for the Dune Meet at the **Crest of the World**, where they discuss how they might preserve their planet against the seemingly unstoppable encroachment of small farmers, freeholders, and the all-powerful Corps.

The one major city on the planet is simply known as "**The City**". It is where Vix and his Board of Management once lifted off from the planet's surface for their great exodus. The City is built on the ruins of an Ursai outpost atop a burried human city, long ago stripped of any valuable tech. But, with the only two major spaceports on the planet, the City is the hub of commercial and social activity on the world, and overseen by an ARK Foundings representative.

Far from the City, isolated settlers make their way through life as scrap-miners in company-owned towns, or freehold farmers raising Thud Cows or coaxing sickly plant life from the barren ground. Small communities run by elected mayors or thuggish warlords – sometimes both – may manage to eke out an existence on the mesas, but life is tough. A handful of scientific communities work to undo some of the damage caused by the planet's half-baked terraforming, and purify toxic water sources. A dependable source of water would be almost as valuable as a regular supply of fuel.

Far above the hardscrabble life of a Varspherean farmer, Corp-controlled space stations govern life for residents and visitors. **Varsphere Five** houses all the commerce coming in and out of the system, while **Varsphere Seven** oversees administration, law, and order. **Varsphere Six** is a paradise station for visiting CEOs and dignitaries, because one mustn't dirty one's shoes with the dust of the worlds they decide the fates of.

Cerberus System

- See full Legion write-up from pg: 99.

"Everywhere we travel, people are living by the skin of their teeth (or mandibles, depending on company). In Cerberus, things feel different. The Legion are building something remarkable – something tightly controlled, but safe. Let's just hope they stay on our side."

– Unattributed Corp Opportunity Report.

At the end of the X'ion conflict, the Legion wandered, adrift without a war to fight. Their travels brought them to a system that they named Cerberus. This would be the system they would make into their own, from which they could watch for the return of the X'ion, the reignition of the flames of war, and from which they could guard the rest of the galaxy from harm. They would be the universe's watchdog.

Cerberus is a complex system comprised of six planets orbiting around an angry yellow sun. It sits adjacent to a major Ley Line, in the bleed of Ley Dust. This makes transit into the system challenging, creating a natural bulwark against wandering dangers.

Only two of the system's major planets are terraformed. **Cerberus Prime**, the adopted homeworld of the Legion, is an ice-blasted rocky snowball perfectly suited to the cold-loving, disciplined Legion. And, far on the outskirts of the system, brushing up against the ever-swirling Ley Dust storms, the planet **Hypnos** lures adventurers and researchers hoping to catch a glimpse of the ancient past through distortions in the Ley fields.

The other planets in the system are no less important to the Legion. Tiny **Charon** houses the resting place of the Legion's great war fleets, where the ancient ships are slowly being brought back to combat readiness. Rocky **Thanatos** is a hive of feral Nephilim where young Auxilia Legion go to prove their worth in a great hunt. The gas giants **Nyx** and **Persephone** hold their own secrets beneath swirling storm clouds and among their many orbiting moons. A few signs of Mondian habitation remain scattered across the system, including defunct satellites and abandoned ruins.

The greatest drawback of the Cerberus system was, and continues to be, its complete lack of essential fuel resources. This lack led the Legion to be becalmed in the system for generations until the arrival of the Corp, who were able to strike up a lucrative and mutually beneficial relationship with the Legion – starship fuel in exchange for military might. This relationship has continued, unbroken, ever since. Corp fuel tankers are a common sight in Cerberus, travelling tightly controlled shipping lanes to designated drop-off points. Meanwhile, Cerberus's chief export are the Legion themselves as mercenaries.

Legitimate crews and traders with no contraband to hide usually benefit from the Legion's tight security, and are able to make reliable, if unremarkable, profits trading for munitions. It is those crews with their eyes on paydays that might take them outside the accepted rule of law that should watch their backs against fearsome **Vulpe** agents or black-clad **Hoplon** enforcers.

Cerberus Prime

- **Mean Diameter:** 8,102 km
- **Surface Gravity:** 9.98 m/s²
- **Rotation Period:** 68.2 hours
- **Orbital Period:** 569 days

"Like its Legion occupants, Cerberus Prime is cold, unyielding and armed to the teeth. It is a world of cold order, but with an inner fire that calls for more."

– Adam Swagger,
Kaltoran explorer.

The home world of the Legion, though not the world of their birth, Cerberus Prime is a huge ball of rock and ice sitting at the outer edge of the system's Goldilocks zone. Almost too cold to support life, the planet is favoured by the frost-resistant Legion.

Legion have spread across this frozen world, finding ways to survive the endless assault of frost, and the ever-present threat of native wildlife and feral Nephilim creatures. Nomadic tribes travel across the entire planet, following the seasons and hunting for survival using the dwindling technology their ancestors were assigned when the tribes were commissioned. In the cities, towns, and factory farms, Interior Branch Legion bend their will and their genetic legacy towards the mundane but essential matters of society – production, labour, agriculture and homemaking. Yet the inner fire burns within them, calling them every day back to the adventure and violence of the army.

The walled city of **Castra** is the largest settlement, and the social, political and administrative heart of the Legion. Its snow-swept streets bustle with the daily activities of civilisation. It takes many visitors a while to notice the peculiarities of Legion life. There are no hawkers selling food from carts, no shops peddling luxuries. The sounds of life are functional–instructions and confirmations. This is a city founded by a people whose only life has been war, whose very genes orient them towards rigid structure, organisation, and discipline.

Occupying a stout, Legion-constructed complex almost dead-centre in Castra is the **Casilia Principia**, the administrative hub of the Casilia Curia. Every decision that matters in Legion society is made within these walls.

Life outside the Legion cities is harsh, with an attrition rate similar to many prolonged battles and sieges from the Great War. Only Legion could survive out there and only Legion nomads could thrive. Visitors to Cerberus Prime, or Auxilia soldiers patrolling out from Castra, are likely to encounter nomads from the **Nemean** tribe. The Nemeans tend to keep to the high mountains surrounding Castra, where they can maintain their camps in well-sheltered caves that extend deep into the rock.

In orbit, most large freighter visitors to Cerberus Prime will land on the trading moon of **Honour**. Huge fuel tankers land and depart like clockwork, depositing their cargo and leaving empty, though with larger bank balances. The smooth operation of **Honour Station** is one of the Casilia Curia's highest priorities.

Kumba System

- See full Remnant write-up from pg: 147.

"The All-Being returns the Remnant to life. The Echoes of the Deatomiser attempt to drag them down again. There is no future in Kumba. Only an endless stagnant cycle of death and rebirth."

– Leon Maris
Existential Value Assessment Division.

The Kumba system is made up of eight planets orbiting a small hot sun named Denderedzwa. Once upon a time, at the height of the great Archon empire, the Kumba system was home to the Ursai – one of the oldest and greatest of the Archons' child species. But after the Ursai's betrayal of the Archons, and the Nephilim's betrayal of the Ursai, then the Ursai wiped all sentient life from the system with the firing of the Deatomiser. The system crumbled and became home only to the ghostly psychic Echoes of the creatures caught in the Deatomiser's discharge, cursed to endlessly replay their final days in a spectral pantomime. These phantoms still infest the planets, moons and ancient stations across Kumba, preventing any true utilisation of the valuable resources of the system.

But change came upon this star system when the All-Being began to resurrect the Remnant on **Kumba Prime**, the key planet in the system and ancient capital of the Ursai. This dustbowl world is in the grip of ongoing ecological collapse after the X'ion war. Few ships approach except to take on refugee passengers and transport them to Haven for a better life. The Remnant live in isolated and scatted gutas (cities), collaborating across distance and through argumentative council meetings about the future of their species in Kumba or in Haven, following the All-Being or finding a new destiny. However every week, many ships carrying refugees depart the system looking for a better life in Haven.

Five other terraformed worlds orbit Denderedzwa, each with their own dangers, history, and hidden treasures. The once-great global metropolis Chishongo wraps around the equator of **Shumirai**, with no Remnant to fill the empty homes and abandoned industrial zones and only the ghosts of the past roaming the streets. **Kubudirira** has been reclaimed by complex megafauna that are hunted by Ursai Echoes when they attempt to approach ancient war camps. The twin planets of **Mwanakomana** and **Mwanasikana** house ancient Archon labs where the superior genetics of the Ursai were perfected – these labs now lie in ruin after raids by wartime Ursai and the destruction of the planets' ecologies. Finally, there is **Mudziviriri**, the outermost planet in the system and a common refuelling stop for ships entering or departing the system as part of the endless churn of refugee evacuations.

Though the flow of movement around Kumba is always out, there is plenty to provide mercenary crews with opportunities to turn a profit, or uncover the ancient secrets of the Archons and ancient Ursai. This includes the tantalising promise of the **Arcadia** Quattuoria Station in orbit around Kumba Prime – a damaged but wealthy repository of Archon resources, technology and history.

Kumba Prime

- **Mean Diameter:** 13,109 km
- **Rotation Period:** 21.8 hours
- **Surface Gravity:** 9.87 m/s^2
- **Orbital Period:** 497 days

"Let us leave this forlorn world of sand and spectre"

– Chatunga Itsva,
All-Monk.

Kumba Prime is an arid desert world haunted by the ghosts of the past – both figuratively and literally. Once this was the vibrant capital world of the ancient Ursai – a home world brimming with life, culture and growth. Now it stands as a marker of the tragic end of the Ursai – the arch traitors and the cruelly betrayed – and the resurrection world of the Remnant. Though the fingerprints of the All-Being touch every part of this spiritually rich world, the future of the planet seems dim. The world's dwindling Remnant population are gradually evacuating for the greener pastures of Haven, leaving Kumba Prime to the clawing hands of the Echo ghosts that infest the surface.

The majority of Remnant on Kumba Prime follow the teachings of the All-Being, delivered by the prophet known as the All-Embodiment and his disciples. But others, particularly in the southern gutas, adhere to the teachings of the Psion Mind. Fewer still embrace the X'ion All-Truth heresy, conflating the X'ion with the All-Being in a dark and dangerous pact. Regardless of the truth of his origin and purpose, the presence of the All-Being is felt across Kumba Prime in holy sites and religious relics.

Most of the landscape is harsh stony desert. Ancient Ursai cities stand atop tall cliffs that once were the banks of vibrant canals that transported fresh water across the continents. These canals were also the major transport and cultural pathways of the Ursai. After the betrayal of the X'ion and war with the Nephilim, the once rich ecology of the planet collapsed. Remnant theologians are unsure why the All-Being has seemingly chosen to allow the continued degradation of the home world, but no repair seems likely.

The landscape of Kumba Prime is dotted by gutas operating in a loose theocratic federation, with a guiding council meeting frequently in the guta **Chokwadi Mvura**. Gutas can be sprawling metropolises of thousands of people, or small hamlets of merely a hundred. What each has in common is that they are the site of a Simba Mabwe, a relic created by the All-Embodiment with the essence of the All-Being that has special powers and, most importantly, ward off the dangerous Echoe ghosts that plague the planet.

Gutas – especially the larger ones – tend to be established in the ruins of ancient Ursai settlements where settlers can access the ancient infrastructure that they left being at the triggering of the Deatomiser. Typical gutas include shambling tent cities of colourful flapping cloth, and worn stone buildings designed for happier times where water ran freely and the Ursai were prosperous. Life in the gutas is hard, and many consider them just a stopping point on their journey off-world to Haven.

Praid

- See full Zhou write-up from pg: 175.

"Those prancing hippie Twi-Far would have you believe that they are acting in the best interests of us Havenites by keeping the location of Praid a secret.

But if I were to don my tin foil hat for a moment and indulge in a favourite conspiracy theory, I suspect they have set Praid up to be more than just a prison world for the Zhou, but also a trap for the Oni. Those great Oni World Ships are following the Twi-Far, but just as they will inevitably descend upon Haven so too will they find Praid... and when they do, those mighty Oni and their slaves will be eaten alive by the unstoppable Zhou."

– Dominque Octan,
Corp Socialite "The Real Truth" livestream.

The planet Praid is one of the most beautiful and biologically diverse worlds in all the known galaxy. It miraculously survived the release of the Archon's Zhou weapon and became the cradle of the Zhou species that we know today. Its location is a closely guarded secret, known only to a handful of the most influential Twi-Far of the Dragon and Phoenix symphonies. Officially, this quarantine is to protect the Zhou while the Twi-Far prepare them to enter interstellar society as a whole, but detractors have posited a range of alternate, less charitable, theories.

Visitors to Praid are extremely rare, and will generally require the cooperation of the Twi-Far Symphonies. Private ships are never allowed to make the journey – only Phoenix Symphony navigators piloting Twi-Far vessels, with passengers kept far away from navigation screens. Ambassadors from major factions and inter-species cooperatives have been shuttled to and from Praid, but these are extremely rare. The Eden Brood Nephilim are offering a gigantic reward to anyone who can give them the location of the Zhou homeworld.

The location of Praid is a closely guarded secret known only to a small cabal of Twi-Far leaders of the Dragon and Phoenix symphonies. Even Zhou who have been transported aboard Twi-Far ships could not point to their home world on any star map.

The de facto capital of Praid is the coastal forest Zhou city of **Zaliene**, where tribal elders from across the planet gather to collaborate on inter-tribal problems, trade and negotiate off-world travel with the Twi-Far. Zaliene is a huge web of woven buildings hanging from trees, connected with vines and rope bridges traversed by Zhou of all shapes and sizes.

The wildernesses of Praid are dangerous to those who don't know them, not least of all because of the feral Nephilim who were the reason for the deployment of the Zhou in the first place. Feral and dangerous, these beastal Nephilim warriors are deadly foes even to the greatest Zhou hunters.

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Alice Shepard
Anabasis
Andrew Chase Erickson
Andrew Smith
Arturo Pérez
Azdan
Badula
Balevala
Ben Allen
Ben MacDonald
Ben Taels
Ben Zorn
Brad
Brian & Thianna Jamiel
Brian Kreft
Bryant
Cameron Hunt
Chris Hamilton
Cole Stephan
Craig C Randall
Dan Rogart
Dane Mitchell
Daniel
daniel Bell
Daniel Leggett
Daniel Younker
Denis Gaty
Edchuk
Edward Wyatt
Eric Li
Felix Shafir
Fuselage
Garikoitz
Garrett Severson
Gary J. Anderson
Ghost6442
Giacomo Mazza
Ginnobushi
Giuseppe
Glen Wayne Parnell
Gregory Crawford
Hexagon
Hugh Ashman
Irina Iscandar
Jacob
Jaime Treseder
Jamie Law
Jason
Jaxx & Loti
Jay Salu
Jeff G
Jonas Hoflin
Jonathan Sinn
Joseph Edge
Joshua Ward
Kate Kift
Kellen McCormack
Kenah Benefield
Kevin
Kris Hume
Kurt Blanco
Mark Edwards
Mark Kenney
Matthew C Baker II
Michael Dilorenzo
Mitchell Houston
Morgan
Morgan Lean
Morgan Pelham
Necrobeard
Nelson Potts
Nicholas Wright
Oscar Simmons
Osmina Deveraux
Papp Istvan
Paranoius
Pettousai
Robert Hughes
Robert McCuaig
Ronaldo Nascimento
Ryan Percival
Salvador Martinez
Simon Joseph Brown
Spacht
Taylor Clarke
Taylor Wilson
Thomas Freed
Thomas van Berendonk
Thomas Woodland
Tom Killingbeck
Tsai Pei Chien
Zach
Zane Ilsley
Zanshi Kaijin
Zastaver
Zomborgon